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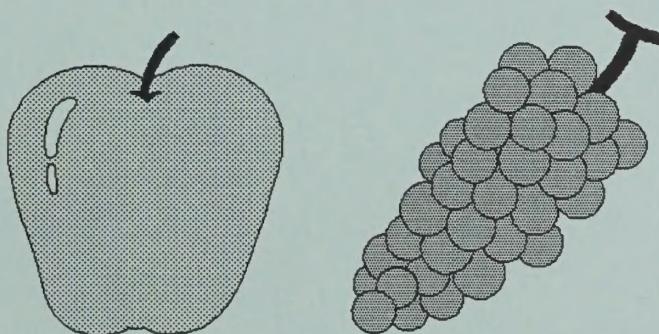
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SPECIALTY COMMODITIES FARM LABOR AG CHEMICAL USAGE



SUMMARY OF 1993 DATA USERS MEETINGS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

United States
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FOREWORD

This report summarizes discussions at four Data Users Meetings held in March and April 1993 to discuss USDA economic statistics programs. Also included are written statements which were provided by meeting participants or by individuals who were unable to attend.

Listening meetings have been held nearly every year since 1978 by agencies under the Assistant Secretary for Economics. These meetings have identified a number of improvements which have been incorporated into the ongoing reports and research program.

The 1993 meetings focused on the NASS specialty commodities, farm labor, and agriculture chemical usage; AMS market news reports; ERS situation and outlook reports; and WAOB supply and demand estimates.

The material presented in this report is a summary of the major points presented at each session. No attempt was made to capture verbatim comments. All answers and subsequent discussion based on remarks by a particular speaker are shown by indentations.

* * *

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE OVERVIEW

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is the only Agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) whose sole responsibility is to collect, analyze, estimate, publish, and disseminate unbiased statistics about agriculture and related areas. These statistics issued by NASS cover virtually all segments of agriculture. These areas include field crops, livestock, dairy and dairy products, poultry and poultry products, prices received and paid by farmers, specialty commodities, agricultural labor, and agricultural chemical usage.

To continue to serve the agricultural industries, NASS believes it is essential to maintain a dialogue with industry leaders. Annually, at various sites across the United States, a series of meetings are held which are open to all segments of agriculture to discuss issues relevant to NASS and its programs. Each year a selected group of commodities are highlighted. This year, the focus is on specialty agriculture, agricultural labor, and agricultural chemical usage. These areas have received renewed attention in the past few years from within the agricultural community and from the outside. NASS currently devotes nearly 25 percent of its resources to these program areas.

SPECIALTY COMMODITIES -- Specialty commodities in the NASS program cover diverse sectors of agriculture. Currently, commodities and areas included in the estimating program are: dry edible beans, berries, coffee, floriculture, citrus fruits, noncitrus fruits, ginger root, hops, lentils, maple syrup, mint oil, mushrooms, nuts, peanuts, Austrian winter peas, dry edible peas, wrinkled seed peas, Irish potatoes, sugarcane, sugarbeets, sweet potatoes, taro, tobacco, and fresh market and processing vegetables. Specific crop estimates made by NASS, and the dates of their release, can be found in the 1993 Agricultural Statistics Board Catalog.

The importance of specialty commodities is illustrated by observing their share of total U.S. agricultural cash receipts. The cash receipts in 1991 for all commodities, including those in and out of the NASS estimating program, totaled \$175.5 billion. Specialty commodities accounted for \$36.6 billion or about 21 percent of the total cash receipts. Since 1986, when total cash receipts equaled \$147.2 billion, cash receipts of the farming sector increased by 19 percent. During that same time, cash receipts of the specialty commodities increased 35 percent and they went from accounting for 18 percent of the total to the current 21 percent.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL USE STATISTICS -- In 1990, NASS began collecting agricultural chemical use data as part of the USDA Pesticide Data Program (PDP). The NASS data collection program is just one part of the PDP that involves several other agencies including Agricultural Marketing Service, Economic Research Service, Human Nutrition Information Service, and the Food Safety and Inspection Service. The long-term is to develop and communicate objective information on agricultural chemical use in food products by way of: reliable State level agricultural chemical use data; statistically based pesticide residue analysis; actual human exposure estimates; and analyses of costs and benefits associated with alternative pesticide policies, programs, and practices.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE OVERVIEW (Continued)

In 1990, NASS completed the initial survey covering vegetables, melons, and strawberries in the 5 major producing States: Arizona, California, Florida, Texas, and Michigan. The 1991 survey shifted to fruits and nuts. For that survey, 13 States were included and chemical use was obtained on 30 different fruits and nuts. Those States produced about 90 percent or more of the total U.S. production of each commodity in the program. In 1992, the program rotated back to vegetables, melons, and strawberries but was expanded to 14 States. The plan for this survey is to rotate coverage between vegetables and fruits and nuts, annually. In another segment of the initiative designed to respond to food safety, water quality, and pesticide regulation issues, since 1989 NASS has conducted chemical use surveys on 10 field crops.

FARM LABOR – U.S. farm employment estimates have been published for over 80 years beginning in 1910 with annual estimates of the nation's farm workers. There have been numerous changes in frequency and detail of worker numbers published since that date as program funding and policy changed. Currently, employment estimates at State, regional, and U.S. levels are published for January, April, July, and October for self-employed, unpaid, and hired workers. The NASS series on the number of farm workers, based on the Farm Labor Survey, is the only USDA series of its kind.

Employment data by agricultural service firms have been published for California, Florida, and the United States since July 1978. These workers are employees of a crew leader or service firm that is hired by the farm or ranch operation for specific tasks. These tasks include most of the Standard Industrial Code 07 activities such as soil testing, harvesting of crops, veterinary services, sheep shearing, and farm management services.

Estimates of average hours worked by farm workers, during the survey week, began in 1965. Since 1982, estimates for "self-employed" and "unpaid" workers have been published instead of the category of "all family members." Unpaid workers must work fifteen or more hours during the survey week to be counted. Data are published for selected States, regions, and the U.S.

Farm wage rate information was first published in 1866 as annual averages. Published wage rate estimates varied in frequency since then and have covered a variety of categories and types of work performed.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE OVERVIEW

WHO AND WHAT IS ERS?

The Economic Research Service (ERS) is a sister agency to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)--all in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In many ways, ERS is more abstract and ad hoc in nature compared with NASS, AMS, or FAS.

Our basic mission is to provide economic and other social science information and analysis for improving the performance of agriculture and rural America. We fulfill this mission in a variety of ways:

- o ERS carries out a diverse program of economic situation and outlook for major commodities or commodity groupings of which fruit and tree nuts and vegetables are two. Over 100 reports are published annually, including 7 in fruits and nuts and vegetables;
- o ERS is responsible for conducting policy and staff analysis for the office of the Secretary of Agriculture and other policy makers; and
- o ERS conducts a variety of basic applied economic research on the economics of American agriculture.

This presentation will focus primarily on ERS's fruit, tree nut, and vegetable commodity programs.

ERS is currently organized around 4 main program divisions--Agriculture and Rural Economy, Resource and Technology, Agriculture Trade Analysis, and Commodity Economics. The fruit and tree nuts and vegetable commodity programs are housed in the Commodity Economics Division within the Specialty Agriculture Branch. There are 3 economists specializing in fruit and tree nut analysis plus a fourth who works on environmental horticulture. For vegetable and melon analysis, there are 4 economists.

IMPORTANCE OF THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SECTORS

Fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables are among the most diverse, least subsidized, and financially successful components of U.S. agriculture. Together, these sectors:

- o Account for about 4% of the nation's harvested acres;
- o Generate 26 percent of U.S. crop cash receipts;
- o Pull in roughly 17% of U.S. net cash farm income;
- o Account for \$4.5 billion, or 11 percent of all U.S. agricultural exports;
- o Produce an ever expanding selection covering hundreds of traditional and specialty food commodities. This can be seen in the supermarket produce section with the selection today much wider than 10 years ago;
- o Generate economic activity throughout the economy with \$21 billion in farm receipts and over \$100 billion in retail sales; and
- o Provide many of the vitamins and minerals in our diet that are essential to proper nutrition and general health.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

OVERVIEW

(Continued)

The scope of fruit and vegetable commodity programs in ERS involves several key areas. First, ERS monitors current events and available information in the various major markets. ERS also maintains databases and presents economic data and information to the public in a variety of ways. ERS prepares situation and outlook reports and yearbooks and is also the source of all official per capita use statistics for U.S. agriculture. Finally, ERS conducts applied economic research including selected in-depth industry studies. Some of these include the U.S. watermelon industry, the U.S. mushroom industry, an aggregate fruit and vegetable industry study, and an upcoming sweet corn industry study.

DATA SOURCES

NASS data forms the core of the ERS database. We use most all the information NASS provides on fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables including acreage, yields, production, utilization, prices and price indexes, stocks, financial data from the Farm Costs and Returns Survey (FCRS), and crop conditions in the Weekly Crop Weather report.

In addition, the expansion of fruit & vegetable coverage by NASS in 1992, which reversed most of the cuts made in 1981, are welcomed by ERS and others since it helps fill some of the big voids in our per capita use series.

AMS, the Agricultural Marketing Service, is also an important information source. AMS Market News data is critical to keeping up with current market developments. We use everything from fob prices to truck rates in our analysis.

The Department of Labor through their Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides retail prices, and consumer and producer price indexes for a number of commodities and commodity groupings although commodity coverage has slowly eroded over the past 5 to 10 years.

The Department of Commerce through their Bureau of the Census, provides U.S. fruit, tree nut, and vegetable trade statistics including volume and value by country. The Census of Agriculture provides important fruit and vegetable commodity benchmark data for many items not covered by USDA statistics (radish, greens, squash, pumpkins, etc).

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service through attache reports from various countries, provides the world agriculture situation and publishes the Horticulture Circular containing information and data on U.S. horticultural trade.

FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations collects world production and trade data by country for a number of major fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables.

Some individual States (such as New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and California) provide basic production statistics for a number of fruits and vegetables, some of which are not covered at the national level. This data was critical during the 1982-91 period to making estimates of per capita use and helping us to follow trends in some of these markets.

The fruit, tree nut, and vegetable industries also provides important information on such things as stocks and frozen pack. It was and still is a major loss to our per-capita use estimates for canned fruits and

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

OVERVIEW

(Continued)

The fruit, tree nut, and vegetable industries also provides important information on such things as stocks and frozen pack. It was and still is a major loss to our per-capita use estimates for canned fruits and vegetables when industry stopped reporting canned stocks and pack in 1990. Fortunately, tomato processors have agreed to provide basic stocks data which will help salvage per capita estimates for processing tomatoes, the second largest vegetable in terms of fresh-weight equivalent per-capita use (70 lbs/person). In some cases (largely for fruits), crop utilization data from NASS was used to replace lost industry data.

ERS CLIENTELE

ERS prepares outlook reports for fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables and makes presentations such as those at USDA's National Agricultural Outlook Conference each December and various regional outlook conferences and seminars.

ERS also provides staff analysis for both the Department and Congress on economic impacts of such things as droughts, freezes, hurricanes, and policy decisions such as trade pacts and labor policies. This includes the recent preparation of a congressionally-mandated study of the U.S. fruit and vegetable industry.

ERS also serves the broad information needs of the general public by responding to over 4,000 diverse requests for economic information on fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables each year. These requests are received by telephone, fax, written correspondence, and personal visits. ERS also prepares responses to letters addressed to the executive branch, including the president.

ERS provides fruit, tree nut, and vegetable information to the media for wire service releases, tv and radio interviews, and for popular articles and magazines.

ERS prepares various printed reports during the year including **4 Fruit and Tree Nut and 3 Vegetables and Specialties Situation and Outlook Reports**. We also contribute to several other ERS publications such as **Agricultural Outlook**, **Farmline magazine**, and **Food Review magazine**.

SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

Situation and Outlook Reports are reviewed prior to release by Outlook boards composed of analysts in various agencies. For fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables, the so-called interagency committees are composed of analysts from ERS, NASS, AMS, FAS, and the World Agricultural Outlook Board.

The Vegetable Yearbook is composed of times series data generally beginning with 1970, largely at the national level only. There are over 100 tables with vegetable data from a variety of sources. Major sections include:

- o an industry overview with summary graphics and tables on per-capita use and farm cash receipts.
- o 3 fresh vegetable sections which include commodity acreage, production, grower and retail prices, trade volume, supply and use summaries, and annual price spread tables.
- o There are 16 tables concerning various aspects of processing vegetable markets, 10 tables on potatoes, 2 on sweetpotatoes, 14 on pulses with some State-level data as well, 7 mushroom tables, and 5 specialty vegetable tables including imports and shipments.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
OVERVIEW
(Continued)

The Fruit and Tree Nut Yearbook is laid out in much the same way as the Vegetable Yearbook except it contains more State-oriented data tables. The Fruit Yearbook begins with a set of general fruit industry tables and then moves into sections focusing on noncitrus fruits, citrus, berries, tree nuts, per capita consumption, trade (basically exports from major exporting countries), and production and value by States.

PER-CAPITA USE SERIES

One of the few original data series on fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables created by ERS is the per-capita use series. Per-capita use is derived from supply and use tables which contain supply-side variables such as production, beginning stocks (for processing vegetables), and imports. From this total supply, exports, shrinkage and loss, and ending stocks are subtracted. What remains represents civilian and military utilization. Per-capita use is calculated by dividing total utilization by total U.S. population.

ERS provides per-capita use estimates for 52 vegetables or vegetable groupings (including potatoes and dry beans) and 63 fruit and tree nut categories.

ELECTRONIC DATA ACCESS

ERS now offers data in alternative forms, one of which is electronic data products on diskette. ERS maintains, and updates annually, over 120 electronic data products with several fruit, tree nut, and vegetable titles available. Most are in Lotus spreadsheet format. These data products include:

- o Both the Fruit and Tree Nut and the Vegetable Yearbook tables;
- o Dry bean and pea data (ERS's pilot data product offering in 1986);
- o Fruit and vegetable price spreads and margins, APHIS import data, 1987 Ag census special tabulations, and commodity specific products for watermelon, potatoes, and tomatoes.

ERS also maintains a free agency bulletin board system which currently can be accessed via an 800 telephone number (9600 baud modems only). The text, tables, and graphics of each Vegetable Situation and Outlook Report are also available on the bulletin board.

This April, we began an Auto Fax service where data users can access by FAX machine selected timely information on fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables. This service is easy to use and offers a table of contents of available document codes.

ERS FRUIT AND VEGETABLE COMMODITY RESEARCH

ERS also conducts applied economic research. This year, our work plans include a study of the sweet corn industry which will include time series data on the fresh, canned, and frozen industries. Plans also include breaking out per-capita use of dry edible beans by major class rather than as an aggregate group and publishing results from a survey of post-harvest chemical use in the U.S. grapefruit industry.

An FCRS-based study of the cost of producing fresh-market onions in major states will be released this summer. With a consistent survey and methodology, direct comparison of costs between states will be possible.

**ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
OVERVIEW
(Continued)**

Cooperative agreements at Universities are expected to yield results on NAFTA, produce marketing, and consumer willingness to pay for produce.

ERS also has work on-going modeling the economic implications of trade liberalization (specifically for NAFTA).

Plans include looking at the economic implications of early prorate suspension for California/Arizona naval oranges. ERS has also started a project on fruit and vegetable price analysis.

Work continues on adjusting U.S. export data to reflect under-reporting of exports to Canada in the late 70's and 80's, and we expect to release a statistical bulletin on this for fruit trade.

In conjunction with Agriculture Canada, ERS is completing a U.S.-Canada Potato Industry Structure Study. This should be released in the fall of 1993.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE OVERVIEW

Fruit and vegetable market news reports provide an exchange of information among growers, shippers, wholesalers, and others on current supplies, demand, and prices of over 400 fresh fruit, vegetable, nut, ornamental, and other specialty crops. Because of the perishable and seasonal nature of fresh fruits and vegetables, prices and supplies fluctuate rapidly from day to day, and even from hour to hour. Thus, fast and timely reporting of supply, price, and price-making information is necessary to ensure an efficient marketing system.

The information is gathered through telephone and face-to-face interviews carried out by skilled market reporters employed jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and State agencies. Reports are impartial, current, reliable, and confidential. They are disseminated free of charge by satellite, newspapers, radio, and television, and are available on a subscription basis in printed reports and by facsimile machine. More than 400 different reports, issued daily, weekly, monthly, or annually, assist industry members in making marketing decisions.

Terminal market reports on fruits and vegetables are issued daily from 22 major U.S. cities. These reports include price data on commodities traded at the local wholesale market level. They also include data on rail arrivals, unload and track holdings, receipts by truck or airline, and, in port cities, arrivals by boat. Prices reported in terminal markets are those received by wholesalers for sales of less than a carload or truckload of a product.

Annual price summaries for each terminal market are issued at the end of each calendar year. These summaries report for each week the price range for principal commodities sold on a day selected as the most representative of the week's trading activity. Sales are reported only on products of good merchantable quality and condition from production areas normally supplying the city.

Shipping point reports on fruits and vegetables cover the major growing areas and provide both rail and truck shipment information. The reports include f.o.b. shipping point prices that represent the most uniform level of trading. Prices are reported daily by type of sale and indicate what the shipper or grower/shipper receives for the produce.

Seasonal shipping point summaries are issued at the end of each marketing season. Many summaries deal with a single commodity for a specified production area. The reports summarize information on production, shipments, distribution, shipping point and terminal market prices, and other factors influencing marketing.

The National Shipping Point Trends is a weekly report that details background information at various shipping points on such things as shipments, prices, trading during the past week, crop conditions, harvesting progress, and the outlook for the upcoming 2 weeks. A similar report covering terminal wholesale flower markets is also available.

The Market News Service reports on foreign-grown commodities when they are sold in this country. Special reports are issued on Mexican, Chilean, and Caribbean Basin produce.

The International Report covers the movement and price of selected commodities in the following foreign wholesale markets: Toronto and Montreal, Canada; Guadalajara and Mexico City, Mexico; and London, England. Also, Caribbean Basin countries and Chile are included. Additional foreign markets are planned in the future.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
OVERVIEW
(Continued)

The National Truck Rate and Cost Report lists the average freight rates from most major shipping areas to selected markets across the United States on a weekly and yearly basis.

AMS Food Purchase Reports are issued weekly. They contain information about USDA purchases of commodities for the school lunch program and other domestic food donation programs.

The biweekly Pecan Report covers the demand, market conditions, and prices paid to growers for pecans at southeastern shipping points as well as in some competing areas. It also includes reports on all nut sales made at the wholesale terminal markets. The weekly Peanut Report contains information on growing, harvesting, and market conditions. It includes prices for farmers' stock, shelled or cleaned peanuts, peanut meal, and peanut oil in major shipping areas.

The monthly National Honey Report provides information on honey and other news of interest to beekeepers and honey handlers. The weekly Wine Report contains prices and information on market conditions for bulk California wine sold f.o.b. at the winery.

Processing crop reports are issued by numerous production area offices from June through October. Reports indicate the volume delivered to processors and the prices paid for strawberries, various types of bush berries, red tart cherries, and asparagus. Prices paid by processors for apples, potatoes, and sweet potatoes are reported each week by most production area offices in regions where these commodities are grown.

Ornamental crops are reported on at both the wholesale and shipping point levels. All cut flowers, decorative greens, and some other ornamental crops sold at major markets, regardless of where they are produced, are reported on once or twice a week, depending on the market. Shipping point reports are issued for important production areas in California, Colorado, Florida, and Massachusetts, along with prices paid to importers for Caribbean and South American cut flowers.

DATA USERS MEETINGS

Portland, Oregon

March 4, 1993

GENERAL SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

John Kratochvil - Oregon Department of Agriculture

What type of cooperation does NASS get with its voluntary surveys?

Fred Vogel - National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)

Cooperation is generally quite good but it does vary by type of survey and area of the country. Overall cooperation may be 90 percent or higher, particularly in a State like Oregon, but cooperation on long questionnaires in a State like Nebraska might be only 60 percent.

Ron Fujii - Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission

Do people respond quickly or are there timing problems?

Paul Williamson - Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service

Surveys have to be completed quickly so his office uses telephone and personal interviews for followups of mailed questionnaires. Using all procedures, the Oregon office often gets 95 percent or better cooperation.

Clayton Hannon - Oregon Association of Nurserymen

He wanted to thank Paul Williamson for today's invitation. His association has been interested in expanding information on the nursery industry. Two years ago, they found a friendly congressional delegation and were able to get special surveys funded. The first report by Paul's office was very helpful.

He wants to send a message to USDA that the climate for cooperation across the nursery industry is much more receptive than just a year or so ago. He feels the American Association of Nurserymen is now eager to set up some program of nationwide statistics. He has just returned from 3 days in Washington, D.C. His conclusion is that future budgets for associations as well as government agencies will be tight. Associations need to look forward to how they want to operate in 1995 and 1997, not just concentrate on 1993. No one should rely on past testimony about data needs and interest in statistics.

Norbert Kinen - J. Frank Schmit & Son Company

The nursery industry needs to be aware of the environmental movement and the role it can play in a better and more beautiful environment. His industry must produce trees 3 to 10 years ahead of demand. It is hard to predict recessions and they often end up with over-production of some products. Because of over-production, there have been severe price drops in shade tree prices.

National statistics are needed on what is being consumed and what is produced in order to avoid over-production. His company might be selling products at a \$16 million level but producing at a \$21 million level with the surplus being destroyed.

The industry needs to modernize and use computers and other technologies but they need to develop the right procedures. For instance, most companies track "lost sales" in which a customer requests a product which is not available. That customer may need 100 trees of a particular type but if he has called six firms, each firm has counted that as a lost sale and the industry will probably now overproduce.

Rod Christensen - Far West Spearmint

He uses import/export information from the Foreign Agricultural Service which he finds helpful. His one concern is whether tight budgets will mean that information will be cut for specialty commodities like his.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

It is impossible to predict the future in terms of how severe budgets might be but NASS hopes to always maintain some information about all commodities currently covered. Agriculture is best served by having broad coverage of production. NASS is looking at the frequency of reports and at ways of making estimates more efficiently.

Bill Nelson - Oregon Winegrowers Association

His association is working with Paul Williamson on an annual vineyard report. That report is very helpful to growers and has actually improved cooperation between growers and winemakers.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

It will be much easier to maintain data series such as the vineyard report where commodity groups are providing cooperative funding than for data series paid for exclusively with Federal funds.

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

His work is in modeling and forecasting future demand and the economic impacts of changes in the apple industry. Exports are becoming more important, up to about 25 percent from 10 percent only a few years ago.

There are two important data shortage areas for apples. The first is the quality of each year's crop which is hard for government agencies to measure. The industry hopes to find some surrogate measures which are related to quality.

The second need is for price series in other countries. It would be very important if the price of French apples in the Far East could be determined. It is hard to find a good price series but attaches can usually find out what current prices are.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Is it wholesale and retail prices that Bill wants to obtain or does the industry need to know the costs of production for other countries?

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

There may always be subsidies in foreign areas so it is more important to know the actual retail prices.

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

The Market News Service is picking up some foreign data such as the prices of Chilean apples landing in the U.S.

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

That might be a helpful surrogate. How can those data be obtained?

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

Data can be obtained from the individual Market News offices where the fruit are landing or from Washington, D.C. This expanded need for data for exports is the driving force behind the new international report of Market News. Market News worked in Mexico to develop a market news service and to train the Mexican staff.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Eurostat must have a lot of statistics on production and price. How can those data be obtained?

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

Some of those countries may not have good market news systems and may need training.

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

He has found some contacts who can provide Eurostat data but they want a very big markup for supplying the information.

Bill Nelson - Oregon Winegrowers Association

He sometimes has problems with data from California and considers them in the foreign category. He feels that standard data should be obtained from attaches and translated so everyone can understand and utilize them.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Ed Cissel of the Foreign Agricultural Service has made significant improvement in the consistency of foreign data by developing specific questionnaires for attaches to fill out. Does Gary Lucier know if fruit data are included?

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

Yes, fruit data are covered in the standard attaché reports. He knows that the amount of Mexico data has been expanded for example.

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

He has found that going through FAS in Washington, D.C. is often helpful rather than going to specific attaches. Sometimes the attaches are not cooperative with special requests.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

ERS may be able to start a new series of data from Mexico. However, AMS is probably the best bet for obtaining more information in the near future.

Brent Searle - Oregon Department of Agriculture

He runs the Farm Credit Mediation Program in Oregon and has found two types of data that would be helpful to agricultural lenders. The first would be demand information: What are the credit needs and the number of borrowers at various interest rates? He wondered if questions could be added to Census questionnaires or to some other survey.

The second area of data needs is in the environmental compliance and cleanup area. There is presently no way to measure what effect needed cleanup costs are having on credit availability. All he has is some anecdotal data but he understands California is starting a program to get lenders and sellers together to negotiate costs.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

He will check with the Resources and Technology Division people in ERS to see if they have any emerging projects.

Yee Lee - Oregon Department of Agriculture

She is working on a project trying to measure how much of the high value crops are exported from Oregon. She is using census data for manufactured products and is looking at crops such as spearmint, wine, and strawberries. She has found some information in a national trade data bank and a shippers data bank but she finds many data are confidential. She does use data from Paul Williamson on fresh market and processing but not all commodities are listed the same way.

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

FAS is doing some good work on projections of foreign markets. Yee might be able to use those techniques.

Yee Lee - Oregon Department of Agriculture

She has used some FAS data. She has had difficulty for instance in tracing the different ways that apples move from Oregon.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

He will talk to Yee at lunch to see if he can offer any other suggestions.

Yee Lee - Oregon Department of Agriculture

She is also trying to get the consumption of Oregon products in Oregon, in the USA, and in foreign locations.

Fred Vogel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He explained the process of collecting export data. The basic source is the U.S. Customs Service. The inspector for Customs is mainly interested in proper tariffs, not in statistics. Forms go to Census Bureau where they are coded and processed. There are timing and quality problems with some of the forms. Also, the export data usually measure only port of shipment and not the final destination.

Bill Jensen - Washington Apple Commission

He agrees with Fred's explanation and has found those shortcomings with the data.

Ron Fujii - Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission

His organization worked with NASS in the past to get a breakout of Cold Storage data by type of pack. The other types of data that would be helpful are who owns the product in storage and how much is in foreign hands. The data would need to be timely and collected every 4 or 5 months.

Bob Conroy - Conroy Packing Company

Processors are supposed to report to the Market News Service in Yakima. However, some processors apparently don't report or don't report on a timely basis. The data from Yakima goes to the Food Institute Weekly but they are misleading if not complete.

He also mentioned a situation when about 12 million pounds extra were found in the Cold Storage report and it was hard to determine what State that might have come from.

Bob Hansen - Idaho and Eastern Oregon Potato Commission

He often senses similar data problems in the potato industry. He wonders if the monthly potato storage report is based on full reporting or if it varies from month to month.

Don Gerhardt - Idaho Agricultural Statistics Service

His office does get 100 percent coverage from processors each month. They also get reports from nearly all potato warehouses monthly.

Bob Hansen - Idaho and Eastern Oregon Potato Commission

Would it be better on the potato storage report to work with a representative sample?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

The potato warehouses are stratified by size and what types of potatoes are being stored. If a particular warehouse does not report on one survey, that plant is estimated for directly rather than just expanding the totals for the plants that did report.

Harold Blain - Pea and Lentil Commission

The annual report of acreage and production is particularly important for his industry, much more so than forecasts during the season. The most important thing is to have accurate information.

His office is working on an International Trade Commission claim against Canada. He finds that not all imports are recorded and more information is needed on Canadian product being transhipped to Mexico. The North American Free Trade Agreement has probably made data availability worse.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

ERS has found that it is usually best to use Canadian import data (from the U.S.) as our export data since imports tend to be better measured. ERS is considering a publicity bulletin on import and export statistics procedures.

Harold Blain - Pea and Lentil Commission

He has one suggestion for the Agricultural Marketing Service. He knows that travel is expensive but it is important for market reporters to meet the industry face to face at annual meetings.

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

He wanted to comment on shipments of Canadian products to Mexico through the U.S. Those normally would move in bond in order to avoid double payment of duties. He does feel that exports to Mexico are under reported.

Harold Blain - Pea and Lentil Commission

He would agree with Tom based on his experience.

Bruce Pokarney - Oregon Department of Agriculture

As the Department's Public Information Director, he puts out information about Oregon agriculture in weekly reports and brochures and handles many daily calls for data. He finds that most people want geographic and commodity specific information. The county by county breakouts currently available are greatly used and more would be appreciated. The diversity of products is especially important in Oregon.

Exports of Oregon Products are important. He feels that the data on shipments by ship are much better than overland exports to Mexico or Canada. One new data need surfaced recently when it was proposed to shut down the Oregon State veterinary school. The horse industry came forward to oppose the cut. A count of horses would be helpful.

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

He agrees with Bruce that the truck and rail export data are not as good. It sometimes seems like a big black hole with no good way to measure. Even with good data on total exports, the portion from Oregon might not be counted properly if the phytosanitary certificate is issued somewhere in route instead of at the point of origin. Also, many shipments seem to make it to Mexico without paperwork.

Gwen Poulmarch - Oregon Department of Agriculture

Since she is on an exchange program for her studies in France, she has been interested in French statistics. She would like to know how much is exported to France and from where. She is also interested in imports from France.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the U.N. does track movements. However, those data do not contain many details. They may show all apple imports into France but not those of Granny Smiths. Price data are not shown in detail but value can be divided by volume for average prices.

Pat Zimmerman - Washington Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE)

Her organization is trying to find the prices that producers get in different countries. That information should be very important for producers in this country.

She has been interested today to sense that some of the nonprogram crop commodity areas are not in bad shape. WIFE was concerned last year by the glowing comments from President Bush and Secretary Madigan about how healthy the agricultural economy was. The WIFE organization was started because farmers were so busy with production that there was little time to focus on other farm economics issues. WIFE is interested in farmers receiving parity between costs and income.

In recent years, many farms have been lost from agriculture but most machinery dealers and other suppliers have also gone out of business. Expenses have been rising much faster than incomes.

Her organization has been concerned about data published on farm incomes. They have compared Internal Revenue Service data from Form F filings with the official USDA statistics. The first year that was compared showed a \$9 billion difference between IRS and USDA. In 1973, IRS filers showed \$7.2 billion and ERS estimated \$33.3 billion. In recent years, the spread in the two numbers has been growing.

She also wanted to comment on a particular survey. Her farm has been selected for this year's barley cost of production survey. The advance information brochure lists many uses of the data including "setting loan rates." This could possibly be seen as using data from farmers against farmers. She thinks farmers should be involved in the design of cost of production surveys.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He wanted to comment on the farm income question for the benefit of other participants. He has not followed the data closely but is not surprised by Pat's comment that the spread in the two series is widening. The official farm income series constructed by ERS uses an accounting approach. All production and sales are measured along with shifts in inventory levels, then expenses are subtracted. The IRS data are administrative data self reported by those who are allowed to or choose to file Form F tax returns. One major difference in the levels is that corporate farms and vertically integrated operations cannot use Form F. Thus, as some industries become more concentrated, less of that income is in the IRS series. There are also some other major differences such as not measuring breeding stock sales on Form F and differences in depreciation procedures. Another key thing to realize is that many operations not qualifying as a farm because they don't have \$1,000 in agricultural sales use the Form F to report large losses.

The ERS accounting procedures are consistent with those used to calculate U.S. gross and net national product and, in fact, ERS data are used as the farm portion of GNP.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

He wanted to add that the cost of production legislation did establish a review board of farm representatives who meet annually to review the cost of production definitions and the timing of the various commodity surveys.

Pat Zimmerman - Washington Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE)

She would like to have her organization represented on the Cost of Production Review Board and would volunteer to serve herself.

She wanted to follow up on Rich Allen's explanation. Her organization does know that Form F has been used by individuals for such activities as dog breeding and having pleasure horses. However, many loopholes should now be closed and WIFE feels that the disparity between the two series is not warranted.

Bob Zimmerman - Washington Wheat Producer

He did not plan on speaking today but he wanted to express one concern. It appears that the Clinton Farm Program may be set up as a "safety net." However, the safety net might not kick in as long as a farmer still had assets. Farmers need accurate cost studies to show what the true situation is in the country.

Bob Conroy - Conroy Packing Division

He has a question about a possible new data series. Strawberry acreage and production has largely shifted to California. There is now as much raspberry production in Oregon as strawberries. Could the Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service do a forecast of raspberry production before harvest if the industry provides the funding?

Paul Williamson - Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service

His office is starting a new feature this year in measuring acreage intended for harvest in June. They would be able to survey for expected yield if it was late enough to get past the major winter and spring damage.

Bob Conroy - Conroy Packing Division

He is reminded that 20 years ago or so the industry worked with Congress to get forecasts for blackberries and boysenberries. Those worked for 3 or 4 years but then many growers stopped cooperating and the series had to be cancelled. Now he is asking for only the raspberry crop.

He also wanted to mention the problem of Yakima getting only partial data and sending those partial results to the Food Institute.

Doug Hasslen - Washington Agricultural Statistics Service

Is there a problem if Washington and Oregon production data are available but not British Columbia?

Bob Conroy - Conroy Packing Division

The British Columbia data are not a problem. There is one office in Canada which collects data from all processors and everyone in the industry has the same consistent data.

Paul Williamson - Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service

His office has seen the problem of the Market News Service reports on berries processed being incomplete. His office will have total coverage and have the correct total but some people want to assume that the estimate is too high based on the Market News reports.

Paul Rains - Oregon Fryer Commission

His situation seems to be different than that of the other commissions. He works with three processors in Oregon and gets a monthly check and a summary. Once a year he re-verifies all of the monthly numbers but he works with Paul Williamson every month.

He knows that the fryer industry is a special situation since most growers are actually contractees but is interested in how other commissions get their reports.

Pam Williams - Washington Fryer Commission

She has a concern about how a particular number is used. Annually the farm level value of fryers per pound is published by NASS. That number is picked up and used as if it is a retail value, even by State organizations.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

That value which is estimated currently is the one needed for cash receipts and farm income. Perhaps the need is more education of data users to pick up the proper level for total value after processing.

Gary Olson - AMS Market Order Office

For his purposes of running the various market orders in the Pacific Northwest, it is important to keep up with all figures from the State Statistical Offices and AMS to be sure all production is accounted for. He works with the State Statistical Offices to be sure the best production figures are available at the end of each season.

There are special needs for certain marketing orders. For example, pack and shipment figures for pears are closely reviewed against one another.

Bob Hansen - Idaho and Eastern Oregon Potato Commission

Growers are always interested in how good the import numbers from Canada are.

What will the North American Free Trade Agreement mean to reporting? Will there be more data or poorer quality data?

There are some holes in present data series. For example, he knows some Idaho potatoes go to Mexico but that is not supposed to be allowed.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

There needs to be good data for shipments to Mexico since some levels have been built into the agreement.

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

Market News Service made a decision to measure movements themselves because of concerns about data. There are very good data on Canadian movement of potatoes into Maine. About 90-95 percent of the volume goes through Presque Isle and is measured at that point. Census data are used for estimating the rest of the movement.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

Census should have access to all inspection certificates.

Tom Winn - Oregon Wheat Commission

He is sorry that he couldn't attend the entire meeting. He wanted to stress how important the cooperative data are that are collected by the Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service in conjunction with his office. Both variety and quality data are collected which are vital for a crop that is so heavily exported.

Tom Cooper - Agricultural Marketing Service

He wanted to change hats for a minute and relay questions that growers ask him. Could Oregon potato processing be broken out separately? Could Idaho processing be broken out monthly into french fries and dehydrated?

Paul Williamson - Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service

It would be difficult to break out Oregon processing because of data confidentiality rules. Also, breaking out processing in Oregon does not mean that this would represent processing of Oregon potatoes. At harvest time, full trucks are often seen crossing the border in both directions.

Don Gerhardt - Idaho Agricultural Statistics Service

It would be difficult to publish the processing breakout monthly because of data confidentiality. He also doesn't know if processors would be willing to report it that often. The end of season breakout is currently only for all eight States. Perhaps some State breakouts of that total could be made.

DATA USERS MEETINGS

Grand Rapids, Michigan

March 23, 1993

Don Ricks - Michigan State University

He has comments on several different data aspects. First, as far as orchard information, it is vital to have a tight rotation in variety surveys--every 3 years would be good. A gap of 5 or 6 years is too long.

He wants to pass on comments on behalf of the Michigan Apple Growers in support of pesticide surveys. The industry needs good data in order to tell the full story and counter incorrect conclusions.

Michigan tart cherries account for about 75 percent of the U.S. total so it is important to have good Michigan data. However, it is important to also get data for Washington State on that rising production and value.

Farm prices of cherries are rarely known at harvest time. It is important to collect that data later when the price is known. The situation changes and the final price is available earlier for some crop years.

NASS data series split out tart and sweet cherries which are truly two different crops. Since the U.S. Census combines all cherries together, it is not worth collecting. That is something that could be dropped since it will be a worthless figure.

Apple variety information is now more important than ever as new varieties and new planting patterns have been adopted. Data are needed for all States.

Michigan is the number one State for processing apple slices. However, he believes that fresh apple slices get classified as "other." It is important to get fresh and frozen slices separately if possible but at least get them both identified as slices.

An average grower price for fresh apples is not very helpful since many apples are sold orchard run and other are sold as a boxed product. The average does not represent either type of sales.

There are not too many breakouts of plums by State. He feels that Oregon is the top producer but is not broken out separately.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Would growers be able and willing to report production by varieties during the growing season or after harvest?

Don Ricks - Michigan State University

The greatest need is for end of harvest figures on production by varieties. Any other data might come from International Apple Institute surveys.

Tom Butler - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

Growers now sell varieties, not apples. He thinks the industry would now be willing to cooperate. This is quite a bit different than in the past when he thought the International Apple Institute asked USDA to stop reporting varieties.

Marty Saffell - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service

He thinks production by varieties could only be done at the end of the season. Harold Thome commented during the introductions how hard it is to forecast production. Since varieties vary so much across the State, it will be important to get cooperation from all growers. He has been working with some industry people to improve the price questionnaire. There still is an issue about how to price the apples of a grower who is also a packer.

Phil Schwallier - Michigan State University

He agrees that the production by variety is one of the biggest needs.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

He feels that the industry realizes how important the data are and would cooperate.

Pat Chase - Gerber Products Company

Even with improved production data, the every 3-year variety surveys are needed to forecast future production changes.

Harry Foster - Michigan Asparagus and Plum Boards

The new 3-year cycle in Michigan of special vegetable, fruit, and nursery surveys will be very helpful for many data needs. He does want to point out a price concern. In some industries such as Concord grapes, the final prices to growers might not be finalized by coops for 2 or 3 years. Cherry prices are somewhat similar. Price information soon after harvest might only represent what producers hope to get.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

When is the cherry price finalized?

Harry Foster - Michigan Asparagus and Plum Boards

The final price to growers for one year might not be set until it is known how many cherries are on the tree the next year. Prices may be known a bit earlier in the cases of short crops. Back when there was a cherry marketing order, the price was normally known by October of the producing year.

Don Fedewa - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Services

The regular price program calls for a preliminary price by October. However, sometimes the price information he could pick up soon after harvest was not reflective of the final average. He even had growers call him some years to ask where they could get such a high price. His office no longer submits the October preliminary price.

Ben Kudwa - Michigan Potato Industry Commission

Potato information is reported by season of production. Michigan has both summer and fall potatoes. Some growers do not use the proper definition and instead talk about storage (fall) and nonstorage (summer) potatoes. NASS should always maintain the seasonal groupings.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

How do growers of cherries make pricing decisions? Do they contract part and sell the others open market?

Don Fedewa - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Services

They would like to have contracts for price. Instead, they market through coops and wait for a price. The coop does announce a target price.

Jerry Campbell - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

There might be large shifts from the original target price. Growers often do not get the final settlement until the next year.

Al Shapley - Michigan State University

He doesn't get involved in research but he does make some labor force projections in his extension work. Many of the concerns with labor statistics are with migrant labor but he thinks there are sometimes problems with full-time worker numbers.

Many of his concerns have to do with accuracy. He favors the moves in the last couple years to get data for Michigan only. Having only regional totals as we did for a while killed any Michigan analyses. He does use three sources:

1. NASS data.
2. Migrant camp license data, since all camps for five or more people must be licensed.
3. Michigan Social Services excellent records on people qualifying for special programs.

The figures from sources 2 and 3 might be double or triple NASS figures since they measure all migrants and not just workers.

He would like to see some breakout of migrant versus other seasonal workers even if it was only a question on in-State or out-of-State residence.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

Labor numbers often focus on adults and don't consider the impact of the under 18 year old. A 12-year old is able to work if they work with their parent. July and August are the peak periods for migrant workers in Michigan.

One number that he has often questioned in the NASS statistics has to do with dairies. He understands that there are about 6,000 dairies in the State and would assume there would be at least one full-time worker per dairy.

Does forestry work come under agricultural labor? He knows there are some special migrant youth education programs dealing with forestry.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS surveys do include any sales of forestry products from farms. NASS also differs from the U.S. Census of Agriculture in that farms that have exclusively Christmas trees are called farms by NASS but excluded in the Census.

Don Fedewa - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Services

The upcoming special Michigan horticulture survey will include all Christmas tree farms as well as other farms growing ornamentals and shade trees.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

Will Don Fedewa call all of those operations farms?

Don Fedewa - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Services

The legislation which set up the special horticultural survey did specify that Christmas tree farms be included.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

His office provides the support system such as food stamps, Medicare coverage, Head Start, and day care which gets a 50 percent subsidy. However, children of workers in nurseries are not eligible for Head Start since the Department of Health and Human Services does not classify nurseries as agriculture.

Is there any cross checking of worker numbers by the amount of acres harvested?

Bob Milton - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS does not match up with acreage numbers for editing or for review of estimates at the State level. He thought the USDA did have some figures on labor productivity.

Al Shapley - Michigan State University

There was a change in Michigan law at one time which set up piece rates which had to tie into minimum wage rates. The standards were set up on what people could pick in 1 hour. That research is old and new technology such as personnel carriers for asparagus has changed things. It is hard presently to make minimum wages picking strawberries but an asparagus worker could get \$10 to \$12 an hour.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

The cost-of-production program occasionally brought in some specialty crops and might have some information. However, the questions varied from being very detailed for some crops to picking up only total labor for others. There were some data collected for citrus but not for other fruit crops. The cost-of-production staff in ERS tends to go to State extension specialists for data on worker productivity.

Bob DeBruyan - DeBruyan Produce Company

Labor productivity depends upon the technology being used.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

He has a question or comment for Manual. He agrees that 12 year old are allowed to work with their parents. However, since they can only get in 2 hours or so a day on school days, that must affect the effective number of workers. He also has observed that more of the older teenagers now seem to be in school.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

He agrees that the amount of work per worker is affected during times when school is in session. However, for crops that are being harvested right when school starts, there may be a tendency for some older children to not register for school the first 2 or 3 weeks.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

He wanted to know if "share croppers" as independent contractors are counted as employees. He knows there is often a debate in pickle production whether some individuals are independent contractors.

Al Shapley - Michigan State University

One new trend that he has seen is for migrant workers to work in packing houses or detasseling seed corn rather than hiring local workers. They are probably hired through some labor contractor. Does NASS pick up these workers?

Bob Milton - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS defined sample unit is the farm operator and all labor is picked up for the operation. When labor is contracted through a crew leader, only the estimated number of workers is picked up since the operator does not have the payment data. Agricultural service workers statistics are picked up separately only in California and Florida. Detasselers would be picked up as working on this operation. Packing house workers would be counted only if the packing house is part of the farm operation.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

Perhaps what is needed is to pick up all non-family workers.

Gary Gershon - Michigan Migrant Legal Assistance Project

The independent contractor issue comes from common law. It is almost impossible for a migrant worker to have been in Michigan long enough to actually be the producer of a crop like cucumbers. Therefore, they should be employees.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

The citrus cost-of-production survey showed that much of the labor was performed by grove care companies and operators had no idea of total workers--only the total charge from the company.

Al Shapley - Michigan State University

Data definitions often depend on the use to be made of data. Since Federal money comes in through the number of migrant workers, most people want to count everyone associated with any agricultural related function such as a packing house.

Gary Gershon - Michigan Migrant Legal Assistance Project

The Commission on Agricultural Workers, during their hearing held in Michigan, had some definite questions about Michigan wage rates. There was wide speculation that the average seemed too high. The Commission concluded that the situation concerning wages is getting worse and effective wages may be declining relative to minimum wage.

Bob Milton - National Agricultural Statistics Service

One factor in considering the published wage rates is that wages paid by crew leaders are not picked up in a State like Michigan, only the number of workers.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

This is also a situation where the distribution of the data would be more helpful than just the average if there were enough data to publish distributions.

Marty Saffell - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service

Another thing that might be affecting the average in Michigan is that piece rates for horticultural workers can be very high.

Manual Gonzales - Michigan Department of Social Services

He wanted to point out one more use of labor data. In the past few years with floods and droughts, Department of Labor funds have been based on worker numbers.

Harry Foster - Michigan Asparagus and Plum Boards

The services provided by the Market News Service have improved and are of more help to industries. He particularly hopes the new international report is successful. There has been an absence in the past of data on acres, production, and cost of production for Mexico, Central America, South America, etc. He had a trip to Mexico last year and found that the government representatives had no idea about the size of their industries.

One concern in this country is that we are moving to the harmonization of rules and regulations for trade but it is not clear that the rules are being enforced elsewhere. He would hope that ERS will help with studies of comparative differences in other producing countries.

Ed Missiaen - World Agricultural Outlook Board

What commodities and what information are needed?

Harry Foster - Michigan Asparagus and Plum Boards

Asparagus is particularly at risk because of differences in labor costs. Comparisons are also needed for cucumbers, tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers, plus other crops grown in Florida. Studies should focus on differences between annual versus perennial crops. Some countries such as Peru and Chile are going to canning for some perennial crops to balance out production variations.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

John Van Sickle did put some budgets together at one time for some crops, particularly of Florida versus Mexico. His data need to be updated.

Pat Chase - Gerber Products Company

He wanted to reiterate importance of the perennial tree surveys. Variety information is especially important for varieties that can be used for fresh or processing. The chemical surveys are also vital for telling the true story of what is happening in agriculture.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

He did fill out the International Apple Institute Chemical Survey which he understands was pushed by some grower in New York. Many people were astonished by the low rates of chemicals used. This information was a real plus and helped to clear up misconceptions based upon assumptions of maximum applications at maximum rates.

Lynnae Jess - Michigan State University

She does make considerable use of the new chemical data. One question that she gets relates to preharvest intervals (period of time before harvest when no chemicals are applied) on applications.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS is looking at collecting data on chemicals used by target pest on a rotational basis. It might be able to publish the top five chemicals applied on one crop per year.

Tom Butler - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

He reiterated the need for sound chemical data on apples. He also stressed the importance of variety information for other areas. Information on varieties is important with regard to the export market, especially to Japan. He heard one estimate of 5 million bushels of Granny Smiths in California for fresh market. Assuming that an equal amount might be processed that still accounts for only half of California's total production. Can NASS collect the production data by variety?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS can collect the data if growers are willing to report it. Now that we are getting good cooperation in Washington State, the potential is there to measure varieties, but not on a forecast basis.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

People don't realize how fast that production by variety can change. The Pacific Northwest States are going to very thick settings and the trees are coming into production years earlier than old varieties. Yields are very high.

Tom Butler - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

The root stock data that the Michigan office picked up on the special survey is a very good indicator for the future.

Bill Robb - Michigan State University

Will the USDA plan to consolidate information services across the Department affect the agencies here?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

There will be little effect in NASS since the Information Division of the Economics Management Staff has been used only for the annual Catalog and Calendar. However, Economic Research Service has used several Information Division people in the editing, design, and printing of their reports so ERS might be affected. The current thinking in the Department is that all information people will be consolidated but then detailed back to the agencies that they came from (at least in the short run). The question for the future is what agency will have the salary dollars. Information specialists in some agencies now spend a good deal of time answering freedom of information request. Some of this work will be curtailed.

Bill Robb - Michigan State University

Throughout the country, the trends in most industries seem to be fewer but larger farms with more full-time employees and less total labor. Since agriculture is in a minority position, it is a question of who will tell the agricultural story.

Rod Stocking - Michigan Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

One of his main duties has been to implement the disaster payment programs in recent years. Those programs have brought in more and more specialty crops. All of the disaster program rules have said that NASS is the first source of data to use for yield and prices. Will NASS be covering more crops in the future?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

There are many proposals floating around. John Witzig is serving on two committees. One group is looking at an approach proposed by the Government Accounting Office to create data for more crops in disaster programs but also to estimate harvesting costs and deduct them if no crop is harvested. The other committee is looking at alternative designs for crop insurance. Charlie Hackensmith commented that AMS is collecting data for about 487 different crops. The last disaster program identified about 1,500 crops for which ASCS had to consider payments.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

He tried crop insurance last year and found it very unsatisfactory. Since his land is contiguous, all of his production was lumped together and he could not cover different planting patterns or different densities separately as he wished. The need to lose 40 percent before he could file a claim also limited the value of the program.

Dave Conklin - Michigan Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

He wanted to express gratitude for the cooperation and support they have received from Don Fedewa's office on the disaster and other programs.

Maurice Klein - Ohio State University

As a data coordinator for his department, he was glad to see restoration of some data series for fruits and vegetables. He hopes that all will be continued as the data are needed for academic work.

Ed Missiaen - World Agricultural Outlook Board

Hopefully, there will be some Mexican data series for people in the future.

Lynnae Jess - Michigan State University

She wanted to again mention that the preharvest interval is an important food safety issue. Information is needed on the interval after last treatment and harvest in conjunction with residual testing. Picking up the preharvest interval is a good target for testing new questions. Information on the chemicals used on the top pests was useful to the industry and public.

Jerry Campbell - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

The present NASS data series for vegetables are working well. The planting intentions reports are timely and the forecasts are very helpful. Following through with production and prices provides valuable information for marketing and planning. He also expressed gratitude for the rotational fruit surveys and the increased emphasis on international data.

He was on a trip last year to Mexico and he was surprised that producers there also saw the benefit of good statistics.

As far as cherry production, it is essential to track Washington State. They have gone from one to two growers to a large production.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

The experiment stations might perform a very important role in testing chemicals and judging the preharvest intervals that Lynnae is requesting. It is important to have responsible testing and sound information supplied to the public.

Bob Boehm - Michigan Farm Bureau

The Farm Bureau supports the continued funding of all of the programs discussed today. He hasn't examined the agricultural chemicals reports but it is important to get that information out.

Blueberries is one crop for which data are not available. Michigan is surely the number one producing State but statistics are controversial. Some growers haven't been convinced of the advantages compared to the possible liabilities or confidentiality aspects for production data. There is, however, a feeling that pack data should be broken out as individual quick frozen versus straight pack.

He has been working with Michigan sugar beet producers. They continue to be concerned about the North American Free Trade Agreement opening up the potential for sugar landing in Mexico and being shipped as a Mexican product. The U.S. industry wants data on Mexican present production and capacity.

Bob Allen - Del Monte Foods

He works with processing vegetables and thinks the present acreage intentions and contracting intentions surveys are working well. The timing is excellent, particularly for the three major vegetables. However, he has a couple of issues to mention.

He wonders if some processors have changed the basis of payment and if the NASS review of questionnaires is sufficient to pick up changes. The questionnaire instructions are clear but data could be reported on either a gross basis or net (after culling) basis and both are proper if that is how producers are paid. The value of production would be the same but the calculated tonnage per acre would change.

He sometimes wonders if open market green beans that are reported are really open market.

He reports for all Del Monte plants. (Since he is moving from California to Illinois, he will now work with a different NASS office.) He sometimes wonders if other companies report centrally or leave it up to each plant.

He questions if some additional NASS questionnaires should have reference dates. Forecast questionnaires tend to collect data based on conditions as of a certain date but not some of the contracting questionnaires.

Is there any information on pear varieties in Washington and Oregon? Just like for apples that data would be valuable.

A couple years ago, he questioned some production data for Minnesota and North Dakota. He was concerned that some processors had not reported and were being estimated for. However, he checked with the NASS offices and found out that everyone was reporting.

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

The Oregon and Washington fruit tree surveys will cover all fruit crops, not just apples.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

He can't stress the value of variety production data too much, particularly for dual purpose varieties.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

He wanted to know more about the International Apple Institute (IAI) variety program versus the data that are being requested.

Tom Butler - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

The IAI Survey is of apples in storage so part of the marketing has been done. Data are needed on all production.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

He has the perception that the IAI data and Cold Storage don't always match.

Tom Butler - Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association

He has noticed variation from time to time. Also the IAI November 15 data might be higher than November 1 although all harvest should be done before November 1.

Charlie Hackensmith - Agricultural Marketing Service

He has heard that the Michigan apple people have their own storage report. He has found that reports are often better if there is competition such as the IAI report at the same time.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

Particular storages might report to the Cold Storage report but not report to the apple industry reports or might do the reverse.

Ben Kudwa - Michigan Potato Industry Commission

He has looked at the Agricultural Chemical Usage report that John Witzig had this morning. Based on survey work that he does with the Colorado Potato Beetle Survey, he wanted to know how many of the total potato acres in Michigan are associated with the 77 chemical reports.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

The chemical usage surveys are not conducted by selecting a certain number of growers, then accounting for all of their acres and all of their chemical use. Instead, the sample is selected from an expansion of all producers' acres and a systematic selection is made. The selection procedure essentially picks out a random acre of potatoes and the grower is questioned about the practices in the field when that acre is located. The advantage of this approach is that each questionnaire has equal weight as far as calculating survey averages and complicated calculations are not needed. The survey averages are applied to official potato acreage estimates to calculate total usage of each chemical.

Jim Neibauer - Michigan State University

He has gotten much data from Charlie Hackensmith and particularly appreciates the new summary of potato data from AMS. However, Michigan is lumped in "other." Does he still need to pester Charlie or are there some other alternatives?

He also is interested in determining where Michigan tomatoes, potatoes, etc., end up. Sometimes he can get some basic data from AMS and do his own calculations. There is a need for additional specific shipping point data from AMS.

Charlie Hackensmith - Agricultural Marketing Service

Perhaps the new data base system will make Jim's search a little easier but many data he would like may never be created. Bill Crocker with AMS in Washington has directed the Market News offices to track prices only if volume data can be associated to make the prices meaningful. Therefore, data might be available for Michigan but not neighboring States and data are not available in Michigan for important crops such as slicing cucumbers, summer tomatoes, and summer squash.

Gary Baker - Enumerator for National Agricultural Statistics Service

As the data base grows, it will be important to combine data inquiries whenever possible. Farmers are getting hit with a multitude of requests from all directions. That is also true for agribusiness companies that he interviews.

Harold Thome - Michigan Hort Society

He has stopped answering all telephone surveys since he got called for so many consumer surveys and product sales pitches.

Mel Koelling - Michigan State University

He represents much of the Michigan Christmas tree industry through his extension activities. He is glad to see that Christmas trees will be measured on the upcoming survey. This is an important industry for Michigan with sales of 5 to 5.5 million trees and wholesale value in the \$100 million range.

Data are needed on both current production and what trees have now been planted for year 2000. Data are needed on varieties, species, and where the trees are located. These data are needed to constantly evaluate the industry compared to the competition. There has been so much over-production in the Pacific Northwest that Douglas Fir trees shipped to Detroit sell for lower prices than local trees. They are not the same quality tree as far as holding appearance but the cost factor is substantial.

Don Fedewa - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Services

He has been working with one contact to get the addresses of all associations in Michigan which should be involved in questionnaire design for this year's survey. There will be a meeting in the next month to design the survey and questionnaire. Output tables are particularly needed.

Mel Koelling - Michigan State University

Is there any movement towards a Nationwide survey for Christmas trees?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

There are signs that sentiment is building for national horticultural specialty surveys but there doesn't seem to be a national voice for Christmas trees.

Laurie Dornbusch - Michigan Christmas Tree Association

She wanted to thank Don Fedewa for today's invitation and for including them in this year's survey.

Boyd Buxton - Economic Research Service

In closing, he wanted to comment that ERS does have two new dissemination options they are testing: autofax and a "call ERS" bulletin board.

Don Fedewa - Michigan Agricultural Statistics Services

Equine was not brought up today but he might expect to get a statement for the written summary.

DATA USERS MEETINGS

Mt. Laurel, New Jersey

March 30, 1993

Art Brown - Secretary, New Jersey Department of Agriculture

In his present job, he has become a believer in the statistics created by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. He has found that new programs such as farm land assessment have verified the levels of estimates being made by Bob Battaglia's office in Trenton.

His office is currently working on an economic recovery plan for agriculture. There is a Farms Commission that is trying to look 20 years down the road. You can't project the future without strong current information. Because there is good information, the Farms Commission is able to look at the short run (next 5 years) to help farmers retiring or going out of business as well as the 20-year plan.

New Jersey agriculture is extremely varied with some 80-90 different vegetables. Much of the production is for niche markets. Broad information is needed for States like New Jersey.

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

How does NASS decide what States will be included for a particular report? Specifically, how were Oregon and Georgia chosen for the nursery surveys?

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

In general, NASS tries to cover as many of the significant States as possible with the money available. For example, the floriculture survey does not include all States but covers the major States. NASS would like to cover all commodities and producing areas once a year if we could.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

He would like to start by outlining about five topics of interest to himself.

Farm labor data analysis is limited by the fact that New Jersey is only shown in regional figures. Would it be possible to change sample allocations so New Jersey data were available by themselves, at least for some benchmark years?

Farm costs and returns data analysis is also limited. Again, could State level data be created for benchmark years?

Is there any chance that NASS will take over the reporting of landings of fish and seafood or the reporting of amounts inspected if a Federal inspection system comes about?

Since equine statistics are not reported, a large hole is left in measuring total agriculture.

Farm Journal has done an article recently on farm income, comparing net farm income from USDA and what is reported to the Internal Revenue Service. The USDA figures go into the Gross National Product figures for agriculture. States need a better understanding of the farm income definitions in order to tell people how the farm sector is doing. Some of the USDA figures now are hard to understand and hard to use.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

The suggestion to use a benchmark approach for the Farm Costs and Returns Survey (FCRS) is intriguing. There may quite likely be some changes in that survey because of an expected budget decrease for the Economic Research Service next year. Once alternative that will be considered for the FCRS is to rotate it from year to year in different parts of the country. However, if that is done but sample sizes must be cut, there still may not be sufficient sample sizes for State estimates.

There is one concern about a rotation scheme. Each survey would be like doing a first-time survey. One of the strengths of the NASS program is that nearly all surveys are repetitive surveys and it is possible to compare survey results from year to year for added continuity. The comparative results enable NASS to adjust for any consistent biases which occur in the surveys.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

One other concern with the labor survey is that many types of workers are combined. Field workers need to be broken out between seasonal and year-round.

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

There definitely is a need for a better accounting of field workers. If the wage rate for machinery drivers was split out of the field workers, it would give a better idea of actual wages for seasonal workers.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Would it be possible for the State to put money in for increasing sample sizes and getting State level estimates?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Yes, State funding can be used, and is used, for increasing sample sizes. There is a definite advantage to both the Federal and State programs of statistics by doing so. However, one problem is that decisions must be made early in order to efficiently build in the added sample size. NASS tries to do all of the classifications and sampling once a year. Samples are now being selected for surveys between June of 1993 and May of 1994.

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

For one special project, she used the Department of Labor definitions which broke out "day haul" from other seasonal workers. She found that farmers knew this definition and it did break out the migrant workers. She is not sure that assuming that all workers of crew leaders are migrants would be correct.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

Have the environmental surveys provided any information on the replacement of chemicals by extra labor? Will it be possible to evaluate the economic tradeoffs?

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

There is some evidence at the national level similar to what Madalene wants, but New Jersey doesn't have State level data to do a good analysis. Not having State level data hurts all analytical ability.

Why are there more inconsistencies in labor data than for other types of data?

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

Is there some methodological problem with labor surveys?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

There is not a methodology problem per se with drawing labor samples or designing survey questionnaires. However, even well designed surveys don't provide the detailed information or the consistency that most people would like. Surveys are done for the week including the 12th. If there is considerable rain that week, the results will be different than if weather is good for field work. Year-to-year changes in maturity also affect comparisons of data from year-to-year.

The one problem that is inherent in labor surveys is that it is harder to convince an individual farmer of the benefit to them of having labor data than it is for production data, or acreage data, or expenditure data. The monthly surveys were starting to run into respondent resistance.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Could surveys be improved if NASS and the Department of Labor worked together? He often thinks the Department of Labor surveys are opinion surveys and not based on as facts as the NASS surveys. NASS does provide some consistent information throughout the year.

Wally Evans - Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service

He wanted to echo the comments on the difficulty of doing labor surveys. Some farmers are always concerned that the survey might be checking on minimum wage standards. It is best to maintain some farms in the sample from survey-to-survey for consistency but the multiple contacts become a problem with cooperation.

Pete DeWilde - New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Agriculture has a great underground economy for some things. If an interviewer asks too many sensitive questions, they may not be getting accurate data on all wages.

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

He sometimes finds some "skeletons in the closet" paranoia. Farmers may feel they are best off the less information that they volunteer. People tell him that they often put down the wrong data on government surveys. Answers might be either too high or too low, depending on what they think will serve their purpose.

Pete DeWilde - New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

He feels many respondents under report price information and over estimate production. He wanted to know what the NASS experience has been with people reporting incorrectly.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

It is very popular around the coffee shop for an individual to claim that they never fill out government reports or that they always give the wrong answers. However, experience shows that cooperation rates are still quite high and a number of facts indicate that people do give good quality answers when they report.

Cooperation rates vary by area of the country and somewhat by survey. However, most cooperation levels are about 90 percent or so except for the longer and more detailed surveys such as Farm Costs and Returns.

As far as reporting correctly, for many surveys it would be much easier for a person to just refuse to report than to go to the effort to make up answers. Most NASS questionnaires have many related details in them which are cross checked in computerized edits. Thus, if someone tried to mis-report, their answers would not likely pass the edits.

The other major factor which leads to someone actually giving the right information is that most information is collected by telephone or personal interviewers in order to complete a survey quickly and publish the results. A person is much less likely to not tell the truth to a person than if they are working with an impersonal mail questionnaire.

Daymon Thatch - Rutgers University

Data has recently come under fire from many directions. There was an article in Fortune magazine and there have been many articles in publications of the American Agricultural Economics Association. Such noted agricultural economists such as Jim Bonnen and Bruce Gardner have spoken out on the issues.

One problem is that government data tends to be quite broad and does not help with specific questions. Data have to get down to some specific details in order to be helpful.

He would suggest an alternative way to structure data. A cooperative relationship is needed between Federal, State, and university organizations working with agricultural groups and private concerns. All data should be pooled so all concerned parties could tap into the data they need. Technology is needed to do the collection, storage, and cataloging of data.

Some of the material from the Clinton administration talks about national on-line data bases. Those are needed in agriculture. Everyone doing a survey now must start from scratch. Cost sharing is needed to collect primary level data that everyone can use. Open lines of communication are needed.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Daymon's suggestion for pooled data sounds similar to the approach that the Census of Agriculture is taking. Has anyone here used the special public use file that Census created from 1987 Census of Agriculture data? That has 20 or so variables on it.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

She did not use the public use file but has made good use of other detailed tabulations. She found she could explain about half of New Jersey agriculture.

Daymon Thatch - Rutgers University

Data should go down to the township level when possible. Then people will be able to aggregate to the level that they need.

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

The farmers who provide the data need to see the benefits to be made of the data in order to be convinced to cooperate.

Daymon Thatch - Rutgers University

Time required for cooperation is another concern. There is a lot of fear among farmers about the amount of time and how often they would be bothered.

Pete DeWilde - New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

He agrees with Daymon's view on what would be helpful but he considers it mission impossible. People always want to know the slant of the organization asking the questions and they respond from that standpoint.

His office has been through 5 years of almost constant disaster programs. He has been discouraged about people filling out fraudulent claims in order to gain benefits from farm programs. However, it is probably less than 1 percent of the farmers misrepresenting the facts.

There are about 120-140 different crops grown in New Jersey. When there is a disaster program, it is a big challenge for NASS to come through with information. NASS offices seem to go above and beyond the call of duty in putting data together for ASCS to use. Some of the complications come in when it is not sufficient to only make payments on tomatoes. Payments are made for fresh and processed and now there are claims for "fresh-staked" tomatoes separate from other fresh.

The pressure for information is to have more and have it faster and more reliable. Changes of programs for the future might mean that information is needed on costs incurred by growers.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

Consistency of data is important in anticipating where the State is going. For New Jersey, equine and environmental horticulture might make up nearly half of all agricultural value. There is detailed information on New Jersey peppers but not on equine or horticulture. It may be possible to make data workable on a national basis but the State specifics are often lost.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

She has had some experience going out and knocking on doors to get information. Thus, she knows how hard NASS has to work to get data on a voluntary basis.

Karyn Malinowski - Rutgers University

The equine industry has had to battle with USDA to be recognized as a real industry and not just pets. Horses are still important from the national standpoint. She hopes that the visitors today will take back the message of importance. The National Horse Council is lobbying for getting statistics reinstated.

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

She wants to put a different spin in the issue of farmer cooperation. New Jersey growers learned a lesson when confronted with new minimum wage regulations for the U.S. In order to evaluate the effect for New Jersey, existing wage and hour data were used which were primarily for other States. Everyone did learn a lot. The exercise heightened the level of consciousness on labor information and pointed out the value of good data. She feels that if USDA can see its way clear to establish a better system of labor data, farmers will support it.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture tried to benchmark the labor data but found it couldn't be done very well when so much information came from other States.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

There is so much more information on soybeans than for nurseries. Are there any institutional barriers to NASS adding more nursery data?

Steve Ropel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

There has been considerable lobbying of our staff members and many individual contacts. We do meet with the floriculture industry representatives every year about the Commercial Floriculture program.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He wanted to ask Fran Brooks if she thought that NASS would get support from industry groups and individual growers.

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

She feels that both the associations and the growers would support new surveys.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS has just had an example of what happens when growers and industry associations are not in synch. Various sheep industry associations did a good job of lobbying with Congress the last 2 years about their data needs. Market News Service is now providing new sheep and lamb price and movement reports and NASS has reinstated a three times a year sheep on feed report. The industry had requested a monthly on feed report that NASS agreed to, if growers would cooperate. One association was sure that they could get the growers to support the survey but after several months only about half of selected growers agreed. This week NASS will cancel all plans for that new survey.

Bill Walker - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

He knows that Bob Bruch was successful in going to vegetable growers for support of a new State project even when the association was not supporting.

Richard VanVranken - Rutgers University

He agrees that we need to educate growers on the value of information. Extension got a rude awakening last year when vegetable growers were very hard on Extension reporters. Perhaps when growers are making a good profit, they are less likely to see the value of information. They need to realize the value. Perhaps Extension could help with public relations efforts.

Karyn Malinowski - Rutgers University

Sometimes there is not much that government officials can do to convince growers. Industry must do much of the education.

Fran Brooks - Rutgers University

She wanted to put on her anthropologist hat. What is the basis of resistance from vegetable growers? We need to understand why they don't cooperate.

Daymon Thatch - Rutgers University

There is another complication that hasn't been discussed. The university and extension systems are changing and people are being asked to take on new roles.

Pat Schlusser - Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association

She wants to be on the record with information about nursery surveys. They do have some industry data for the U.S. Pennsylvania has been fortunate to have had surveys for 12 years through Wally Evans' office. There is good support for the surveys and her association puts a sponsoring letter with every questionnaire. The National Association is using data from the Economic Research Service which concludes that nurseries make up 11 percent of all agricultural sales and is the sixth largest agricultural industry.

What does it take to get a commodity group surveyed? Also, why aren't more trade organizations here today? They should be willing to serve in an advisory role. About 16 States have now put money into the pot for a survey by the association.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS does want to provide broad agricultural coverage. However, it is much more difficult and expensive to survey nurseries than it is for soybeans. Soybeans is one commodity and information is usually collected on multiple purpose surveys that cover many crops. Nurseries represent a very wide range of specific commodities and many different producing variations. Specialized list building is needed and questionnaires need to be fairly long and involved to cover most commodities grown.

Robin Brumfield - Rutgers University

Big growers have lobbied against a check-off system. However, nursery and equine industries are so large that information is needed.

Pat Schlusser - Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association

Industries are in a "catch-22" situation. Until an industry gets some data, it cannot make the point of how important it is to the total economy.

Robin Brumfield - Rutgers University

Industries are continually changing also. The outdoors cut flower industry for the summer is essentially a new industry.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

He feels that the USDA could influence the Census of Agriculture to add more nursery or equine questions.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS does respond before each Census of Agriculture about questionnaire content. However, State Departments of Agriculture and industry associations might have more influence on getting new questions than a Federal agency. The Census of Agriculture has had a broad based advisory committee although he has heard that advisory committees might be put on hold for awhile.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

Is there any movement of Federal agencies and the States pulling together to pool funds to have more meaningful data? There are some Federal needs separate from the State needs.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

The whole structure of NASS is set up to pool Federal and State resources and to avoid duplication of efforts. This past year, we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the first Federal-State cooperative agreement in Wisconsin. The amount of State financial support and the programs that the State wants to support vary widely. One of the common things that is done with State funding is to prepare an annual publication compiling all agricultural statistics for a State. What many people don't realize is that parts of the NASS Federal program are actually funded by other organizations. The county estimates for many field crops are funded by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. The Malting Barley Association provides money each year for variety surveys. Most of the detailed fruit and nut statistics programs are funded by industry trust funds.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

He would like to address a question then to Bob Battaglia on why New Jersey doesn't have more data through the State program.

Bob Battaglia - New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service

They do try to pick up what they can through expanded work with existing surveys. For example, the State has now added new questions on pumpkins and on animal damage.

He feels there are three important aspects to expanding the amount of State statistics. (1) Am I asking too much more on this same questionnaire? (2) Can I get the new information by mail which will be much cheaper than telephone or personal interview? The New Jersey Department of Agriculture wants to maintain as much as they can for consistency. It is very difficult and

expensive to pick up farm costs and returns type data and something else might have to be cut back. They must also be consistent with industry groups. For example, a special nursery survey should not be done for free if the equine industry will be charged \$100,000. (3) How can I avoid overburdening farmers?

Pete DeWilde - New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

He wants to add some other factors to Bob's list. We need to look closely at what we are asking. What is feasible to do (based on cost and other factors)? What is nice to know versus what is important to know. He has been a nursery grower and knows the complexity of that business. A full scale nursery survey would be very complicated. He is not sure the Federal Government should be funding it. Perhaps the American Association of Nurserymen should be supporting with their funding.

Steve Ropel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS is working with organizations. People want more data but associations are rarely willing to give anything back. There has been some good compromises reached with the Society of American Florists on the floriculture survey. Given a certain level of basic respondent burden, the SAF was willing to give up some detailed information for the growers between \$10,000 and \$100,000 in gross sales in order to get eight more States added.

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Does anyone have suggestions of what could be cut back on to free up funding for new issues?

Pete DeWilde - New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

The horse industry may be a good example. There was a series on work horses in the past. That series was no longer needed as mechanization occurred, but now people want information for other kinds of horses.

Bob Battaglia - New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS did cooperate with Agriculture Division of Census to do the Census of Horticulture to save double contacts and respondent burden.

Jayson Harper - Pennsylvania State University

He works with everything but ornamental horticulture. He specifically does the cost of production budgets. He would like to see the processing portion of production and the price per unit for processing broken out for all dual purpose crops. Specifically, he would like to have the split for apples, grapes, and peaches. It would also be helpful for mushrooms.

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS might be able to do more breakouts, but confidentiality may be a problem in some cases.

Steve Ropel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We might need to put some data together only on a regional basis if there are only one or two processors on a State.

Pete DeWilde - New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

If there are only a few processors, they need to understand the need to share information.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

Suppose there was a crop such as soybeans for which the acreage was not changing and was not likely to change but other commodities were changing. Can there be trade-offs as to which commodities each State estimates? Can Headquarters be a clearinghouse as to which States conduct special surveys?

Pat Schlusser - Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association

How are decisions on crops to include made? If you want to survey a commodity, how do you go about doing it? If Congress dictates which commodities to survey (through funding) then does NASS have some say?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

If crops are included in Federal farm programs of some type, they are covered in the NASS program. There has been a reluctance from the Office of Management and Budget at times to allow NASS to cover commodities which are very specialized such as being grown in three or fewer States. The feeling was that, if the commodity only benefits a small area, the States or commodity organizations should pay for the information. One commodity which might be in peril now is honey. The NASS questionnaires for honey have only been approved because of the ASCS payment program and ASCS reimburses NASS for the survey. If honey is dropped from the farm program as currently proposed, we may need to drop the estimates.

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

It may be helpful to remind everyone that NASS and its employees cannot lobby Congress for more funds or for particular statistics. That must be done by associations and other organizations.

Robin Brumfield - Rutgers University

How do we get copies of State questionnaires?

Lynn Matthews - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

In 1988, the New Jersey Equine Survey was funded by the Rural Advisory Council and the Equine Board working together. Once the survey was conducted, the two groups worked to identify special funds for the very nice publication. She was disappointed to not find any equine mention in the blue packet of information at this meeting.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Everything in the packet is from the national program. While there are many people interested in equine statistics and several State surveys have been done, it hasn't carried much support in Congress. Equine is not food or fiber and doesn't get much attention in marketing. Unless there is a disease outbreak, he is not sure that equine will get national attention.

Pat Schlusser - Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association

Is food and fiber a key of how decisions are made? Is that the case for nurseries?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

That is one factor, although agricultural committees in Congress are changing from the traditional production agricultural backgrounds.

Rob Baumley - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

In the farmland preservation area, the emphasis is on appraisal value. However, the issue is "highest" and "best" use. Nursery production is very competitive and high income. He is not sure how equine production would come out. They also look at market conditions including nonagricultural issues. There is a question about the feasibility of returns from \$4,000 per acre land. The more accurate data that are available, the more assessors will use them. However, there is an issue from lenders of how \$4,000 an acre land will cash flow.

Gerard Hlubik - New Jersey Farmers Home Administration

Farmers Home uses price information for a number of purposes: for loss evaluations, for projecting prices, for making loans, and for deferring debt. The national office uses Economic Research Service information for guidelines. If there are more crop price data, Farmers Home can go forward with more decisions. He does use the Annual Statistics Book for New Jersey and puts the data in form for his field offices. He goes to Bob Battaglia with additional questions.

Lynn Matthews - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

She wanted to stress how important data are. Because of the last New Jersey equine survey, they could show how important the industry was and now have a permanent seat on the New Jersey Board of Agriculture. The upcoming survey will add new economic data.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

One thing that has been helpful has been the occasional time series publications. It would help on the State side to look at the historic perspective. He works as the interface between the university and Bob Battaglia to create data bases and publications. He does have a decent data set by now.

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

He got the 1987 Ag Census on CD-ROM and found that quite useful for extracting information.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

One of Bob Burch's original issues was on fish inspection. It is quite unlikely that NASS would get involved in estimating fish landings. However, if Federal inspection of fish is started and if it is done by the Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA, which is one of the two main alternatives, NASS would likely help with a fish slaughter summary.

Another of Bob's issues had to do with farm income definitions. The IRS data come only from Form F filers and does not represent many significant areas of agricultural income. The Economic Research Service data series do involve many definitions. It is important for organizations to understand the ERS definitions and how those data fit into gross national product calculations in order to tell the most complete story about agriculture.

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

He wanted to bring up a new area: farm safety. The Ag Census has added two questions on safety. There are problems with definitions. In some areas of the country, good information can be obtained from hospital emergency room records but farm accidents are a rare item at New Jersey hospitals. There is a growing concern about safety and there may be some funding through the National Industrial and Occupational Safety organization.

Wally Evans - Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service

The NASS office in Minnesota has done a farm safety survey and that is a possible survey topic in many other States.

Lynn Matthews - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

She would like to see the questionnaires and results from other States. Data are needed to get more safety people trained and properly situated.

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

Pesticides get all the attention for injury and accidents but pesticide problems are very rare situations.

John Witzig - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He wanted to point out that a considerable portion of the ongoing NASS program is funded by industry funds. In Florida, the citrus program is totally funded by the citrus check-off program. The industry does not get the results of the special surveys until data are released in regular NASS reports. The barley variety surveys funded by the Malting Barley Association is another good example.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

Is there any chance that parts of the NASS program will eventually be replaced by remote sensing?

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS has been involved in evaluating remote sensing procedures even before the first Landsat satellite was put in orbit. The area frame survey that NASS does every June turned out to be an excellent basis for training and testing computer classifications of satellite data. The system that NASS developed for classifying crop types is being used in France and Italy and is being used by a private individual in the west for advising potato producers.

Satellite data will not replace the regular NASS program for crops. Tomorrow NASS will publish prospective plantings information based on surveys in early March. At the end of June, actual plantings estimates will be published. It is not until mid-August that corn and soybeans can be separated from each other from satellite images so the remote sensing data are mostly helpful for additional verification of the interview survey results.

The Foreign Agricultural Service of USDA uses satellite data, including weather satellites, to judge what crops are grown and the acreages in other parts of the world where survey data are not available. Those techniques are quite good for giving information where none would exist otherwise.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

She thinks that satellite data might be helpful for determining the total amount of land under different wetland definitions. Perhaps water runoff and nonpoint pollution could be monitored by satellite. She doesn't think agriculture causes the biggest nonpoint pollution problems but more land is devoted to agriculture than other uses.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Study of those aspects by use of remote sensing is more likely to be done by the Agricultural Research Service of USDA.

Mike Hunst - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He wanted to point out that NASS does have many options for disseminating information. A number of reports and historic data sets are now available on computer diskettes. All reports, except a few annuals, are released electronically through the USDA Computerized Information Dissemination System (CIDS).

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

Is that a fee system?

Mike Hunst - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Yes, Martin Marietta presently has the USDA contract. Costs are basically \$75.00 per month plus line usage charges to get a variety of USDA publications. A number of organizations access CIDS and then repackage reports on their own electronic services. NASS State Statistical Offices take care of State Department of Agriculture cooperators who want reports from CIDS.

Rich Allen - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He wants to reverse the format for a few minutes. People have defined a number of data needs today. However, one question that he often has to contend with comes from other government agencies and other statistical organizations. That question is "why is there so much more statistical information for agriculture compared to all other areas in this country?"

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

Agriculture contributes quite a bit to reducing the trade deficit and it is important to have good information.

Robin Brumfield - Rutgers University

Agriculture is the biggest user of land for production and is one of the biggest user of inputs.

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

Agriculture has a very high national strategic value.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

Agriculture is one of the few very competitive industries. It generates public goods. There are other tangible benefits such as maintaining open spaces, etc. Farmers are generally hardworking and are relatively poor economically so they do need information in order to remain the most viable.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

As we learn more about soil and the environment, it becomes clear that agriculture provides the best capability for ground water recharge.

Pat Schlusser - Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association

Another special feature of agriculture and farming is that agriculture contributes greatly to the general good life in this country.

Bob Bruch - New Jersey Department of Agriculture

If no data were available, there would be a very broad outcry.

Ray Samulis - Rutgers University

One problem with creating interest in agriculture data is that less than half of 1 percent of people have an ag background.

Madalene Curie Bruun - New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

Maybe the question should be turned around to ask why other areas do not have more data. Perhaps agriculture policy has worked better than policy in other areas.

Adesoji Adelaja - Rutgers University

The role of USDA does have very broad support. Perhaps USDA needs to broaden its message to stress its role in food, natural resources, etc. Agriculture data are important for food wholesaling, trade, and natural resources management.

Gerard Hlubik - New Jersey Farmers Home Administration

The Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc., has a summary of information on agriculture which is broadbased and easy to use.

DATA USERS MEETINGS
Sacramento, California
April 1, 1993

Kenton Kidd - California Apple Association

How do we know that per capita consumption surveys and data collection are comparable in all countries of the world, i.e., are all other countries comparable to the U.S.?

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

No, all data and statistics are not collected comparably across the world. Different countries compile data with different levels of accuracy.

Ron Schuler - California Canning Peach Association

He had some remarks in general and some questions. They use all data in the ERS publications relating to prices and research. They do have a problem with per capita consumption data for canned peaches. Their staff would be willing to work with ERS to produce more reliable data in this area. NASS data on crop conditions in other States, harvest progress, and supplies are followed closely. FAS publications help in providing information on processing peaches and they rely on ERS's Outlook and Situation reports, especially on pricing. They also track pricing agreements with parity prices. All information is useful for "dumping" statistics for foreign countries. They also need to know what is happening in South Carolina and Georgia because that has an impact on California. They need good information to compete in the world market. In summary, he stated that timely and accurate information is vital to their industry because lack of information leads to greater turmoil. While there is room for improvement, the benefits received from USDA reports are very helpful and would like USDA to supply even more reports.

Jim Tippett - California Agricultural Statistics Service

The industry that you represent funds a great deal of the surveys, so nothing will change as far as supplying needed data. In light of recent budget cuts, it is difficult to see how we will be able to supply additional data requests without some cost sharing from industry.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

We will be glad to work with any groups if you have questions on per capita consumption data. Any comments will be listened to and given special consideration.

Vernon Crowder - Bank of America

He did not have a prepared statement, but did have a few questions and comments. First, the market news data are very valuable but it would be better if it were on a seasonal basis with data on volume? Second, the data on land values collected by NASS on a State and regional basis would be more helpful if they were broken down by size of operation, especially for financial data. Third, pesticide use data collected and published by California need to be published by active ingredient. The State of California publishes more than the active ingredient. They have adjuvants and other things included that should not be because they are misleading. Fourth, we need data on non-bearing acres because those tell us what the trend will be in the future. Finally, why is there a discrepancy in data published from different surveys? For example, why is there a difference in cash receipts published by CDFA and ERS?

Sam Rives - National Agricultural Statistics Service

In response to the active ingredient data for pesticides, it has been and will continue to be NASS's policy to publish chemical usage data by active ingredient. We do that on all of our pesticide surveys. The CDFA does not do that. However, beginning in 1992, NASS selected a representative sample from the administrative data at CAL-EPA and converted it to NASS format so that we can publish California data on a comparable basis with other States. We did not do that in 1990 and 1991 because we assumed that CDFA would publish reported results more timely and on a comparable basis with NASS.

Jim Tippett - California Agricultural Statistics Service

In response to the non-bearing acres coverage, we try to conduct a complete update on fruit acres and acreage every year, but the budget is a problem and some counties have not been updated in 10 years. The annual grape survey and others are funded by industry, so we are able to provide good data on non-bearing acres. We are now in the process of conducting a fruit tree survey in Fresno county and future surveys will depend on the State budget.

As far as publishing land values for California for different land areas, it is difficult to increase the sample in light of the recent 40 percent budget cut. Maybe we could consider conducting the survey every other year in order to obtain more detail breakdown. The current sample used for the USDA land value survey is too small to provide estimates by land use by region within California. The reason the cash receipts report for California differs from the ERS report is because the California report is a CDFA program mailed from the California office, and we do not wait for the ERS release. We release the California report in February.

My notes show California did not put the report out last June.

Fred Teensma - Agricultural Marketing Service

I would like to respond to the question you raised on providing data on crop volumes. We do provide estimates on volumes. We provide shipments for most commodities on a daily basis.

Vernon Crowder - Bank of America

What about providing financial data by size of operations? He would like detail in the FCRS with more information by size of operation.

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

Most of the information of that type would come from the FCRS survey. With the current FCRS questionnaire already having such a lengthy interview time associated with it, we must take in consideration the respondent burden placed on farmers. In order to alleviate some of the burden, we try and keep the number of interviews as low as statistically possible. Therefore, the sample is too thin to provide reliable data on a breakdown by size of operation by State. However, ERS does provide breakdown by economic class on a National basis. We will try and work with others to provide more breakdown but don't expect too much because of the sample size.

Bob Hartzell - California Association of Winegrape Growers

Grapes seem to be a crop that does not get as big a piece of the pie as it deserves. They need data to show that the value of grapes rank as an important commodity on the national level. Cotton, corn, and soybeans seem to get all the credit when publishing national rank on value. They are trying to separate the wine industry from the beer and spirits phase and instead be associated with agriculture. They believe grapes rank about 9th in crop value in the U.S. There is a statistical hole in grape data. They need grape concentrate and crushings data for grapes as well as for apples and pears. It seems as if concentrate is not considered an agriculture product. Some foreign countries did not know that California produced grape concentrate. Also, they need world grape concentrate data because what happens in the

rest of the world is very important to California. Since NASS does not include wine grapes in its objective measurements to provide acreage and production data, they rely on a mail survey conducted in July and that is too early. California needs better statistical procedures to account for the numerous pullouts and replantings of vineyards.

He also recommended that NASS et. al. not waste resources on publishing the proceedings as they are probably most useful internally.

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We appreciate your comments regarding publishing these proceedings. We have found that the documentation of the different data users conferences is a great benefit for measuring feedback and determining user needs across the country. There are also data users that can't attend the conferences but want to read the proceedings to see if their views were represented and what other data users' interests are. It also provides us and the user with historical trends in data requests.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

In response to the question on publishing the rank of grape values, ERS publishes tables that show these statistics for grapes and tomatoes. I will see that you get a copy of the publication.

Fred Teensma - Agricultural Marketing Service

Some of the data published previously were dropped because of cutbacks in personnel. Unfortunately, grape crushings was part of that reduction.

Gene Stokes - California Apricot Advisory Board

The apricot growers need more recognition. The publication that FAS releases on products exported no longer carries apricots. This is an appeal for USDA not to drop apricots from any statistics report.

Ron Schuler - California Canning Peach Association

He is concerned about the move to price commodities at the packing house door rather than providing a farm gate price. The farm gate price provides a better picture of returns to the producer. NASS should rank commodities by value in determining the statistical needs. Nursery and Horticulture have greater value than wheat.

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We certainly don't want to drop any statistics that anyone needs. Unfortunately, budget cuts contribute to this. The specialty commodities are sometimes the first to be cut because of the lower number of users of the data, and the data are not used to administer Farm Programs. I am glad to say that no commodities were dropped from the NASS statistics program this past year. Specialty crops and users are very important to us.

Butch Peri - Peri and Sons Farms, Inc.

His concern is how to get the USDA to have more influence in Washington so that producers get fair treatment. NASS, correctly, collects labor wage rates by type of work done, i.e., field work, livestock work, etc. The Department of Labor takes the groups and averages all these groups together giving a misleading wage rate that he has to pay workers. This is unfair and is hurting the growers. They need more strength and influence for agriculture.

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We understand and appreciate your frustration. You raise a very important issue. The industry you represent does have a great deal of influence in Washington, and we will try and do what we can to carry your message.

NASS collected wage rates long before the U.S. Department of Labor decided to adopt our wage rates by groups and develop averages. However, the way in which they disseminate the statistics is up to them.

Kirby Moulton - University of California at Berkeley

A lot of benefit is derived from statistics USDA produces and he supports what has been said about the need for data. There are certain non-government data that could be published maybe on a separate page, and explain that they are not official data, but from Commission Boards, etc. This would provide otherwise unavailable data. He also suggested that different USDA publications which show the same crop could be combined. For example, ERS and FAS often show data for the same crop in different reports.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

That's a good point about combining publications from different agencies. We have done some of that for some crops. We will look into that for further possibilities.

Henry Voss - California Department of Food and Agriculture

Director Voss felt meetings like this produce good results, and that the various groups need to share resources in many different areas. If we did not have the statistics that are provided on a current and reliable basis, we would have lost a great many of our disaster programs.

One of the best programs in the CDFA is the Cooperative Arrangements with NASS and AMS. They need to expand those programs to include three part agreements - industry, Federal, and State.

Chris Rufer - The Morning Star Packing Company

He proposed different release dates for some of the NASS tomato estimates and they are willing to provide funds to arrange for those adjustments. The first has to do with the Intentions report for tomatoes. The purpose of an Intentions report is to look down the road to predict and make adjustments for what is to come. He proposed that the Intentions report be released in January instead of March or April. Second, the Tomatoes Planting report should be released in late May or June 1st. Plantings are usually complete by early May. Third, the current September report should be moved from the third week in September to September 1st. He also proposed no forecast be made for October. The weekly reports are sufficient. The timing of the Annual Summary should not be changed except they would like to see county acreage data.

Greg Smith - Heinz

He was also supportive of the Tomatoes Intentions report to be released in January and would also provide funding.

John Welty - California Tomato Growers

The association believes in accurate and timely information. They would like to have reports at the county level and farm gate prices but were not sure that the Intentions report should be in January.

Ron Radenz - California Agricultural Statistics Service

We could probably make those changes that were suggested about the release of the tomato reports. However, we need a consensus of the parties involved.

Jim Tippett - California Agricultural Statistics Service

I think these proposals have already been discussed and resolved. If we can get industry consensus, we can proceed.

Fred Vogel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We would have to get agreement between producers and processors as not to show partiality, but we will be agreeable to change the surveys to suit the needs of the users. We also have to think about how we can integrate it with the national time frame.

Denise Ward - California Cling Peach Advisory Board

She said they are very happy with the availability of data provided by NASS, and suggested that it is not necessary for USDA to duplicate data that are currently provided by the Cling Peach Board.

Gary Nelson - California Agricultural Statistics Service

We feel the same way, as a matter of fact, we use the Cling Peach Board figures for the end of season final estimates.

Art Sainz - Agricultural Index

They are statistical suppliers and re-market NASS's statistics. They have been doing this since 1978, and although NASS's data are very good, would like to obtain data for other States similar to what is provided for California. Is there a centralized location where they can obtain data without contacting each State? I would also like to get number of growers and how many acres they control. Nursery and cut flower data are also needed.

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

In response to your question on obtaining data for other States, each State has its own interests and Federal-State cooperative agreements which differ by State. But, we can provide help to you in obtaining data from a centralized location for other States.

Fred Vogel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

He was referred to the bulletin in the hand out materials giving names and telephone numbers of people to contact by major commodity groups.

Jim Tippett - California Agricultural Statistics Service

The information for other States comparable to California that you are requesting may not exist. We collect data in California that other States do not. The County Commissioners have data on acreage, production, and value but not by number of growers.

Bob Bradshaw - California Department of Food and Agriculture

He would like to see the USDA agencies do a better job publicizing what is available. I think there are many users who don't realize what is available.

Seth Hall - Western Farm Credit Bank

The 1991 State Financial Summary has not been published. It used to be published in November. When will it be published? He said the Situation and Outlook reports were good, but timeliness is important. He suggested a monthly update report - even if it meant dropping one of the Situation & Outlook reports. By the time he gets a hard copy, its about 6 weeks old.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

The financial summary will probably not be published again in November. It was published a few days ago. If you need data from this report, call Jim Johnson. I will provide you with his number if you don't have it. In regard to the Situation and Outlook report, any time you need any updates or anything in particular, give me a call.

Seth Hall - Western Farm Credit Bank

The FCRS data need to be more relevant to California. The current FCRS is not useful in some respects because it includes non-commercial farms and thus is not representative of California. They need State level data by size to analyze data by different size of operations. He suggested eliminating the detail data and provide broader coverage of State level estimates with a larger sample.

They also need more data on ornamentals.

He was also understanding of budget problems but felt additional data on apples by varieties are very much needed. An annual survey would be satisfactory.

Fred Vogel - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We (ERS and NASS) are examining the detail in the FCRS to see how much detail can be eliminated. Would the level of detail obtained in the 1992 Census of Agriculture be sufficient?

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

We will consider obtaining data on apples by varieties. We will discuss this more in detail within NASS. It could be that we could include this in an end-of-year survey.

Gary Lucier - Economic Research Service

I will give you a name and number to contact to help you in obtaining ornamental data.

Jack Wick - California Association of Nurserymen

He represents a wide variety of factions that go into nursery crops. The nursery industry is very important in California and ranks among the top of all industries in the State. They use the annual report from the Ag Commissioners and at this time are not suggesting they need any additional statistics.

He stated a need for forage statistics - annually by area and by specie. Currently, there is no statistical base for planning everything from research to seed needs.

Don Bay - National Agricultural Statistics Service

There has been disagreement within your industry as to whether to conduct a Nursery survey. We have had some requests but need the industry support before we attempt a survey. I do appreciate the fact that you are not asking for anything.

This concludes our conference and I would like to thank Jim Tippett for making all the arrangements for this important meeting. I would also like to thank Director Henry Voss and all the data users for their attendance and contributions. If you are in the Washington area, I invite you to come by and visit us and let us know what we can do for you.

**Participants at Portland, Oregon Data Users Meetings
March 4, 1993**

Harold Blain
Pea and Lentil Commission

Lindsay Buckner
TreeTop

Rod Christensen
Far West Spearmint

Bob Conroy
Conroy Packing Division

Tom Cooper
Idaho Agricultural Marketing Service

Ron Fujii
Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission

Clayton Hannon
Oregon Association of Nurserymen

Bob Hansen
Idaho and Eastern Oregon Potato Commission

Rory Hayden
Conroy Packing Division

Bill Jensen
Washington Apple Commission

Norbert Kinen
J. Frank Schmit & Son Company

John Kratochvil
Oregon Department of Agriculture

Yee Lee
Oregon Department of Agriculture

Bill Nelson
Oregon Winegrowers Association

Thom Nelson
Head River Growers Shoppers Association

Gary Olson
AMS Market Order Office

Bruce Pokarney
Oregon Department of Agriculture

Gwen Poulmarch
Oregon Department of Agriculture

Paul Rains
Oregon Fryer Commission

Brent Searle
Oregon Department of Agriculture
Pam Williams
Washington Fryer Commission

Tom Winn
Oregon Wheat Commission

Bob Zimmerman
Washington Wheat Producer

Pat Zimmerman
Washington Women Involved in Farm
Economics (WIFE)

Participants at Grand Rapids, Michigan Data Users Meetings
March 23, 1993

Bob Allen Del Monte Foods	Charlie Hackensmith Michigan Agricultural Marketing Service
Beverly Barringer MESC	Lynnae Jess Michigan State University
Bob Boehm Michigan Farm Bureau	Maurice Klein Ohio State University
Tom Butler Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association	Mel Koelling Michigan State University
Jerry Campbell Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association	Ben Kudwa Michigan Potato Industry Commission
Pat Chase Gerber Products Company	Jim Neibauer Michigan State University
Dave Conklin Michigan Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	Don Ricks Michigan State University
Lee Dean Great Lakes Publishing	Bill Robb Michigan State University
Bob DeBruyan DeBruyan Produce Company	Phil Schwallier Michigan State University
Laurie Dornbush Michigan Christmas Tree Association	Al Shapley Michigan State University
Alberto Flores Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs	Rod Stocking Michigan Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
Harry Foster Michigan Asparagus and Plum Boards	Harold Thome Michigan Hort Society
Debra Friday Michigan Agricultural Marketing Service	
Gary Gershon Michigan Migrant Legal Assistance Project	
Manual Gonzales Michigan Department of Social Services	

**Participants at Mt. Laurel, New Jersey Data Users Meetings
March 30, 1993**

Adesoji Adelaja
Rutgers University

Ray Samulis
Rutgers University

Peter Anderson
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Pat Schlusser
Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association

Rob Baumley
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Daymon Thatch
Rutgers University

Joyce Bianco
Ron-Son Mushroom Products, Inc.

Richard VanVranken
Rutgers University

Fran Brooks
Rutgers University

Bill Walker
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Art Brown
Secretary, New Jersey
Department of Agriculture

Ferdinand Wirth
Delaware Department of Agriculture

Bob Bruch
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Robin Brumfield
Rutgers University

Madalene Curie Bruun
New Jersey Soil Conservation Service

Pete DeWilde
New Jersey Agricultural Stabilization
and Conservation Service

Edward Fox
New Jersey Pinelands Commission

Jayson Harper
Pennsylvania State University

Gerard Hlubik
New Jersey Farmers Home Administration

Karyn Malinowski
Rutgers University

Lynn Matthews
New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Jack Rabin
Rutgers University

**Participants at Sacramento, California Data Users Meetings
April 1, 1993**

Bob Bradshaw
California Department of
Food & Agriculture

Hal Carter
University of California

Vernon Crowder
Bank of America

Steven Easter
Blue Diamond Growers

Seth Hall
Western Farm Credit Bank

Bob Hartzell
California Association
of Winegrape Growers

Sam Keiper
Diamond Walnut Growers

Kenton Kidd
California Apple Association

Bob McClain
California Tree Fruit Agreement

Kirby Moulton
University of California at Berkeley

Butch Peri
Peri and Sons Farms, Inc.

Al Pierson
Employment Development Center

Tom Ramme
Processing Tomato Advisory Board

George Reese
California Department of
Food & Agriculture

Chris Rufer
The Morning Star Packing Company

Art Sainz
Agricultural Index

Ron Schuler
California Canning Peach Association

Greg Smith
Heinz

Gene Stokes
California Apricot Advisory Board

Fred Teensma
California Market News Service

Don Villarejo
California Institute for Rural Studies

Henry Voss
California Department of
Food and Agriculture

Denise Ward
California Cling Peach Advisory Board

E. D. Weimortz
CAL/West Seeds

John Welty
California Tomato Growers

Jack Wick
California Association of Nurserymen

USDA HEADQUARTERS STAFF AT 1993 DATA USERS MEETINGS

<u>PERSON</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>	<u>MEETINGS ATTENDED 1/</u>
Rich Allen	National Agricultural Statistics Service	1, 2, 3
Don Bay	National Agricultural Statistics Service	4
Boyd Buxton	Economic Research Service	2
Mike Hunst	National Agricultural Statistics Service	3
Gary Lucier	Economic Research Service	1, 4
Bob Milton	National Agricultural Statistics Service	2
Ed Missiaen	World Agricultural Outlook Board	2
Sam Rives	National Agricultural Statistics Service	4
Steve Ropel	National Agricultural Statistics Service	3
Fred Vogel	National Agricultural Statistics Service	1, 4
John Witzig	National Agricultural Statistics Service	2, 3

1/ Meetings were: (1) Portland, (2) Grand Rapids, (3) Mt. Laurel, (4) Sacramento.

Brent L. Searle
Program Coordinator
Farm Credit Mediation Program
Oregon Department of Agriculture

Desired Ag Statistical Data --

If the following inquiries are able to be worked into an existing survey, the data would be helpful in addressing agricultural credit related issues:

1. Question: What do producers state as the demand for operating and ownership loans and the desired/appropriate rate of interest?

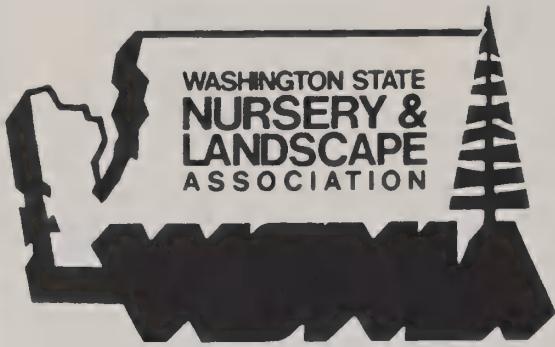
Need for Information/Explanation: The real demand for agricultural loans is unknown. Lenders report adequacy of money supply for credit worthy borrowers, but some measure of demand would enable comparison of supply to demand and analysis of options in addressing related issues.

2. Question: What is the volume of farm land turnover and the related cause of turnover?

Need for Information/Explanation: Broad national studies have been done, but very little information is available about farm land turnover on a State-by-State basis, including cause by: retirement, inheritance, environmental issues, voluntary liquidation, forced liquidation. Other information that would enable better understanding of turnover would include type of operation, age of owner/operator, length of ownership/operation, whether the owner was operating the land or if a tenant was farming the operation.

3. Question: What effects are environmental compliance cleanup requirements (RCRA) having on farm land values, interest rates, and loan availability?

Need for Information/Explanation: Lenders are beginning to require environmental audits before taking farmland as collateral for loans, and in some cases lenders and buyers are being held liable for cleanup of contamination by past owners. How is this affecting the land values, appraisal/closing costs, interest rates, and loan availability?



February 3, 1993

Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, D.C. 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

I regret that I cannot attend the March 4 meeting in Portland concerning agricultural statistics.

We do note with interest that USDA/Agricultural Statistics Service did recently conduct a survey of wholesale nursery production in the State of Oregon. This leads us to wonder if this service is going to be extended to other states, when that might occur, etc. Perhaps you could address these questions in a reply.

I hope you have a very productive meeting in Portland.

Sincerely,

Steve McGonigal
Executive Director

cc: WSNLA Board of Directors
Doug Hasslen, Washington Agricultural Statistics Service
Nursery Association Executives of North America

March 1, 1993

Mr. Steve McGonigal
Washington State Nursery &
Landscape Association
P.O. Box 670
Sumner, Washington 98390-0670

Dear Mr. McGonigal:

Thank you for showing interest in the upcoming meeting and taking time to send us your comments. We are sorry you cannot attend the meeting in Portland. Hopefully, the following comments will answer your questions.

Interest in nursery surveys over the past several years has been intermittent but steady. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has met with various State nursery grower associations and the American Association of Nurserymen to discuss survey alternatives. The restricting factor has normally been the lack of funding. Surveys of the nursery industry have been conducted in various States but only when funds were received from the State Department of Agriculture or directly from the industry.

As you noted, in 1992, our Oregon State Statistical Office conducted a survey of the wholesale nursery industry in that State. Funds for that survey were appropriated by Congress through the special efforts of the Oregon Association of Nurserymen. In 1993, funds were received to conduct that survey again in Oregon and to add to Georgia. NASS plans to use these two States to learn more about the nursery industry, so an adequate national program can be developed when appropriate funding is received.

We have no resources at this time to extend the nursery survey program beyond the two States identified above, unless we skip them and rotate the survey each year from State to State. However, if the nursery industry can successfully secure funds for a national program or for a few additional States, we would be glad to expand the program. We will also continue the policy of conducting local surveys on a State by State basis, if local funding is received.

Thank you, again, for your remarks.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division



WASHINGTON - OREGON CANNING PEAR ASSOCIATION

February 18, 1993

Charles E. Caudill
Administrator, USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Our organization is very disappointed that we are unable to attend the March 4th meeting in Portland regarding USDA's economics and statistics reports. We would like to take this opportunity to submit some written comments with the request that they be considered during the public forum for the Agricultural Industry.

Prior to 1990 it was the custom of fruit and vegetable processors to report the pack, stock and movement of the crop they process to a third party. The third party then combined the information and, to protect the anonymity of each individual processor, reported the statistics in total. Tri Valley Growers in California has decided that it was not in their best interest to report this information and have quit. Rather than divulging their inventories, the remaining processors also quit. Along with other crops, this has had an extremely adverse effect on the Bartlett pear industry.

There are many agricultural crops in which the growers have formed organizations to help promote the sale of what they produce. Organizations such as the Pacific Coast Canned Pear Service or the Cling Peach Advisory Board depend on statistics. Bargaining Associations are helpless without movement and inventory numbers. We have always depended on the USDA for information and now we receive only educated guesses. The single purpose of these groups is to promote the products they represent.

The canners we talk to in the Northwest commit to raw product costs that reflect marketing conditions 12 to 15 months in the future. This is a tough business. We need all the help we can get plus a darn good crystal ball.

It is this writer's belief that any organization that becomes secretive and will not cooperate with industry reporting should not be permitted to sell or be invited to bid product to the USDA. The damage done by non-reporting should not be rewarded.

We wish we could attend your meeting to place one other subject on the agenda. The last true tree census is seven years old, 1986. Perhaps a discussion would be helpful on how a current census could be accomplished.

Once again, we are disappointed that other commitments prevent us from attending. If there are minutes or a summary of the proceedings, we would appreciate receiving them.

Sincerely,

Dick McFarland
Dick McFarland
Secretary, Manager

cc: Doug Hasslen, State Statistician
Directors

March 8, 1993

Mr. Dick McFarland, Manager
Washington-Oregon Canning Pear Association
1108-B West Lincoln Avenue
P.O. Box 344
Yakima, Washington 98907

Dear Mr. McFarland:

Thank you for the comments concerning fruit and vegetable issues relating to your organization and the industry in the Pacific Northwest. Your letter will be included in the proceedings of the forums and you will be given a copy of the written summaries after all four of the forums are completed.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service is not involved with reporting fruit and vegetable pack, stocks, and movement. Your comments on that issue will be passed along to the appropriate agencies involved. The issue you raised about some segments of the industry not participating in voluntary reporting activities was discussed during the March 4 meeting in Portland. Some current market news (AMS) reports were questioned because of a similar problem. There is not a lot AMS and NASS can do except to provide an independent unbiased service to assemble and publish the data if the industry agrees to cooperate.

We currently plan to conduct a tree inventory survey this year in the northwestern States. These surveys are currently underway in Oregon, Idaho, and Utah and will be conducted during the summer in Montana and Washington. One concern is that there appears to be only minimal enthusiasm for the survey from many of the Washington fruit growers. NASS agrees that it is time to update the previous survey, but we cannot provide a reliable product without substantial cooperation. I encourage you to contact Mr. Doug Hasslen, State Statistician at our Olympia office, to discuss ways you may be able to assist him with garnering support from the Washington fruit industry.

Thank you, once again, for your remarks.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:

Doug Hasslen, State Statistician, Washington SSO



Department of Horticulture
Horticulture Building
1575 Linden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
TEL (608) 262-1490
FAX (608) 262-4743

March 8, 1993

Dr. Charles L. Caudill
Administrator
USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-2000

Dear Dr. Caudill:

I will not be able to attend the NASS Midwest Regional Specialty Crops Data Users conference in Grand Rapids, MI later this month. However, I have some comments that I would like to be included in the proceedings.

It is my understanding that the present method of determining apple yield per acre is to ask growers how many acres and how many pounds of apples they harvested. From this information a yield per acre per orchard is calculated. The yield per acre per orchard is then averaged for all orchards within a state or district. Wisconsin has many small orchards and fewer large orchards. Using this method the small, inefficient, orchards are given equal weight to large commercial operations. This method tends to underestimate the actual state average yield per acre in Wisconsin.

I have suggested that an average yield per acre should be determined by averaging the total yield for the state and the total harvested acreage. With this technique large orchards would be given equal weight with small orchards. I think this would be a more accurate number and would more nearly reflect the actual situation.

Obviously, a major reason for this viewpoint is that disaster relief funds are often based on the state average yield per acre. Our larger growers are penalized under these programs for being efficient. Even in poor years our best growers have yields in excess of the reported state average yield. Wisconsin's reported average yield per acre for apples fluctuates between 180 and 230 bushels per acre. I don't think serious commercial growers could have positive cash flow, much less show a profit, with these reported yields. Actual yields per acre for good apple growers should be around 500 to 600 bushels per acre. This reflects poorly on NASS.

I also understand that in many cases farmers under report actual yields. Fresh fruit growers have cash sales and may not report all income to the IRS. As a result, they tend to report lower yield than what actually occurred. This suggests that they do not have confidence in the

Dr. Charles L. Caudill

March 8, 1993

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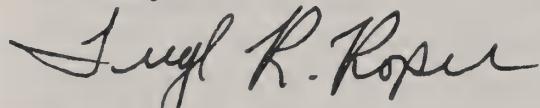
confidentiality of NASS data. I have no solution to the problem, I merely reiterate that a problem exists.

On the same confidentiality issue, we have been asked to share our mailing lists with the Wisconsin Ag Statistics Service so they might have as broad of coverage as possible with their surveys. Although Extension mailing lists are also confidential, we have chosen to share our lists. However, WASS will not share their lists with us that we may also have as broad of coverage as possible. This damages our ability to work together to service agriculture within the state. While government mailing lists should not be shared or sold to commercial concerns, sharing between agencies seems prudent and efficient. I hope this policy will be reconsidered.

I would also hope that funding might be found to occasionally survey small specialty crop acreage in states. For example, in Wisconsin I wish we could determine the number of acres of raspberries, grapes, pears, plums, and currants/gooseberries. This would help us plan Extension programs and would allow us to justify expenditures to service growers of these specialty crops.

Thank you for considering these issues. I wish you a most successful conference.

Cordially,



Teryl R. Roper

Extension Horticulturist, Fruit Crops

cc: Lyle Pratt

087

April 7, 1993

Mr. Teryl R. Roper
Department of Horticulture
Horticulture Building
1575 Linden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Mr. Roper:

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns. We appreciate your comments and welcome the suggestions. Your letter will become part of the proceedings from the regional conferences and you will receive a copy.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is slowly trying to strengthen the procedures followed when preparing fruit estimates. One of the improvements is to use stratified sampling methodologies that select a grower survey based on size, not location. This change cannot be made immediately, however, because a new process might introduce an element of error in the estimate that was not present before. Our Wisconsin office already began making this shift.

I caution you not to expect instant or large shifts in the average apple production per acre. The 1987 Census of Agriculture and the 1990 Wisconsin Fruit Tree Survey established the acreage of apples. To average where you suggest, in the 500 to 600 bushel per acre range, means total production in Wisconsin would triple. As you know, NASS production estimates are closely watched by a wide contingency of university and industry people. If our estimates were that far out of line, we surely would have heard about it long ago. We also would see discrepancies with shipment and cold storage data. To this date, we have received no criticism with the Wisconsin production estimates.

Your comments about farmer's under reporting yields has surfaced many times before and is a constant concern to NASS. Although there is not much that can be done to prevent erroneous reporting, we have data checks that will catch gross errors. Also, our tally of total production received from processors and other sources may offset some of that mis-reporting. NASS also conducts reinterview studies (although not on fruit) to determine the amount of error introduced by survey respondents. These studies are still inconclusive but lead one to believe that the errors tend to balance on the high and low side resulting in very little shift in the level of a State's estimate.

The problem with sharing our lists can be viewed from two sides. First, other agencies do not have the same legal umbrella that NASS has to insure that the names and data collected will only be used for statistical purposes and only in summary with other reports. This high degree of confidentiality has gained us a level of cooperation not enjoyed by many others. NASS cannot afford to jeopardize that. Second, NASS has earned a reputation of producing

unbiased reports, immune from political or outside influence. Should NASS share some information that might be viewed as being used inappropriately, our credibility is damaged. Again, NASS cannot afford to take that risk. However, I am sure you do know that we will cooperate with universities and State Department's of Agriculture within our constraints. NASS is quite willing to conduct, or simply mail, surveys for others.

With todays tight budgets, it will be difficult to expand the scope of our estimates. You mention the key word, "occasionally". Hopefully, local cooperators can provide some support for the periodic fruit inventory surveys. To these, we would like to add some of the lesser produced commodities. We also encourage our State offices to conduct an end-of-year survey to collect data for many of these smaller crops. This procedure was done in Illinois last year and worked well. For a small amount of additional resources, and with good integration into the on-going programs, a valuable set of data can be obtained.

Sincerely,

Frederic A. Vogel
Director
Estimates Division

MICHIGAN CHERRY COMMITTEE

March 16, 1993

Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
USDA/ NASS
Room 4117, South Building
Washington, D.C. 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Thank you for the invitation to attend National Agricultural Statistics Service Mid-West Regional Specialty Data Users Conference in Grand Rapids on March 23, 1993. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend. However, I wanted to take a few moments and point out some concerns that I have from an industry perspective.

The cherry industry, in particular, has lost many sources of information over the last five years. Accurate data is vital to making daily marketing decisions. Because of this void in the industry I think it becomes very important that NASS fill in some of the data gaps as we look into the future.

Let me start with production data. Production data is essential to the tart cherry industry. Basic production data has a big influence on price to the grower on both the large and small crop year. In recent years, Washington state has become a major player in the West. Production is estimated to be 10-12 million pounds annually. I have written to you in the past expressing the need to incorporate Washington state into the annual production reports. I have been told that because all of the production is grown by five or six growers that NASS would not report their production as it could not ensure their individual confidentiality. However, they have become too big of a factor to ignore. Currently, NASS does not acknowledge that there is any tart cherry production in Washington state. Thus, it distorts the annual production figures for the tart cherry industry. I would propose that if Washington state cannot be reported that NASS create an area called Western States and lump the production of Washington in with Colorado production.

Secondly, the processed utilization should be broken down further. For example, the frozen category should be split into 5+1, IQF and other. Currently, there is no way of knowing the size of either of these markets.

Furthermore, the canned category should be expanded to include canned pie filling. In recent years more cherries are going directly into pie filling at pack time and currently pie fill processors are not reporting any data. It is estimated that the pie fill category could be as much as 50 million pounds.

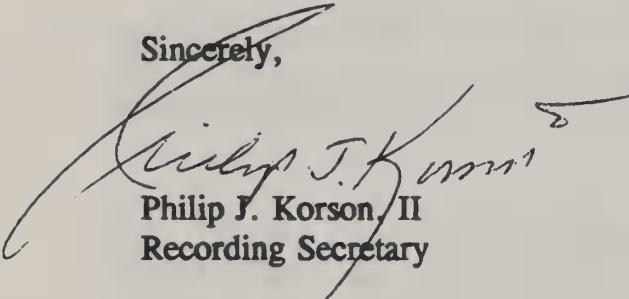
Mr. Charles Caudill
March 16, 1993
Page 2

Finally, I would like to raise the question of sweet cherry production in the state of Michigan. In the last several years there has been a concerted effort to market fresh sweet cherries in the state through a co-operative arrangement. A lot of effort has been put forth by both interested growers and fresh handlers. This effort, as large as it is and as broad as it is in an area that produces 90% of the state's sweet cherries, has yet to market 500,000 pounds. Current NASS fresh utilization numbers indicate 2,500,000 are going fresh annually. I think there is a major discrepancy in this category.

I think that a survey of fresh growers or shippers is important to add credibility to the fresh sweet cherry category.

Again, I would like to thank you for the invitation to attend the regional meeting and for giving me the opportunity to provide input. I hope that by working together we can improve on an already good system of reporting important cherry industry information.

Sincerely,


Philip J. Korson, II
Recording Secretary

PJK:jau

cc: Don Fedewa

May 7, 1993

Mr. Philip J. Korson, II
Michigan Cherry Committee
P.O. Box 30285
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7785

Dear Mr. Korson:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will become part of the report of all conferences held across the Nation and you shall receive a copy of those proceedings.

Let me first address the tart cherry estimates in Washington. In a letter from Mr. John Witzig, Chief, Crops Branch to Mr. Lee Schrepel, Chair of the Oregon Tart Cherry Association, March 20, 1992, it was pointed out that the tart cherry industry in Washington State did not strongly support production estimates. Our State Statistician in Washington, Douglas Hasslen, still believes that support from the few growers is very weak. After hearing your other comments to Don Fedewa, and that you receive Washington production totals, it seems as though there may be some inaccurate communications. NASS has no objections to providing the data you request, if there is an obvious need and accurate estimates can be provided. We will continue to investigate this issue to determine what can be done.

If your office can provide us the complete breakout for processed tart cherry utilization for all the States which estimate cherries, we can publish those data in our annual fruit summary. The Michigan office will collect the data to pass along to Headquarters. We can begin to publish the more detailed breakdown in the July report if data for 1990, 1991, and 1992 are available.

Our Michigan office will also investigate the problems you mention concerning the fresh sweet cherry totals. Accurately determining these minor utilizations for any commodity is very difficult when there are no actual records kept. If any revisions should be made, we have an opportunity to go back to 1987 next year after the U.S. Census of Agriculture data are published. We can, however, adjust 1991 and 1992 in July, if we feel comfortable with the data.

Thank you, again, for your remarks. We appreciate your input and cooperation. I know you work closely with Mr. Fedewa and his staff. I hope that relationship continues.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:

Don Fedewa, Michigan SSO
Douglas Hasslen, Washington SSO



MBG MARKETING®

P.O. Drawer B
04726 County Rd. 215
Grand Junction, Michigan 49056
Telephone 616-434-6791
Telefax 616-434-6997

March 17, 1993

Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
USDA/MASS
Room 4117, South Building
Washington, DC 20250-2000

RE: MASS Midwest Meeting 3/23/93

Dear Charles:

I will be unable to attend this meeting, therefore, will provide my comments in writing.

First, the blueberry production report for Michigan and the U.S. is appreciated. Blueberries are an important high value horticultural crop. The U.S. production has tripled in the past 12 to 15 years, and the economic impact is becoming more widely dispersed.

The first draft of Michigan's production report for 1992 was suspect. The production was under-reported based upon MASS's producer survey. Following discussions with Don Fedewa and his staff, a more realistic report was agreed. The basis for the amendment was the data collected by the Federal-State Market News Service in Benton Harbor, MI.

It is imperative that we be efficient in the data collection. The U.S. has no excess funds as President Clinton is discovering. The Federal-State Market News Service in Benton Harbor has a long history of an excellent collection of production reports for both fresh and process blueberries. These efforts should not be duplicated.

FSMNS does not collect production data for direct farm market or u-pick sales. A method to develop reliable information for this market segment is needed as it is believed to represent significant production in many states. It would seem this could be achievable by sampling known larger volume producers.

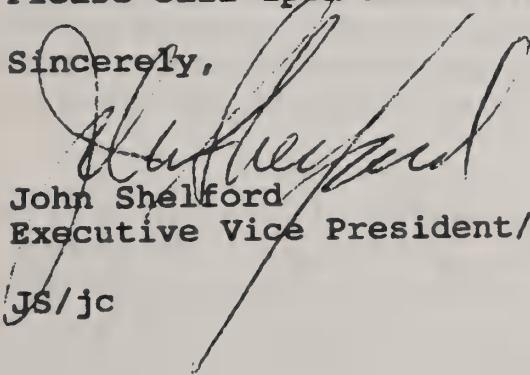
Looking at the U.S. blueberry production situation, it is recommended the following states be included in the report:

Maine
New Hampshire
New York
New Jersey
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia
Florida
Alabama
Mississippi
Louisiana
Texas
Arkansas
Indiana
Michigan
Oregon
Washington

Our company represents a significant portion in Michigan, Indiana, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. We offer our cooperation, and we particularly encourage the involvement of the local Federal-State Market News Service in that the daily information is valuable.

Please call upon me or any of our blueberry team as needs arise.

Sincerely,


John Shelford
Executive Vice President/General Manager

JS/jc

April 12, 1993

Mr. John Shelford
MGB Marketing
P.O. Drawer B
04726 County Road 215
Grand Junction, Michigan 49056

Dear Mr. Shelford:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will be included in the proceedings and you shall receive a copy of those proceedings.

We greatly appreciate your assistance to make the blueberry statistics as accurate as possible. We agree that our data collection efforts must be as efficient as possible. Market News Service reports have always been a critical element used by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to ensure that our estimates are complete. It certainly helps when someone points out that our figures may be missing a portion of production.

Direct marketing of farm commodities has always been a difficult segment of production to estimate. Those sales are typically under-reported or sold by small growers who are likely to be missing from our list sampling frame. To adequately cover that sector, a nearly complete list of growers is essential. Anything you can do to help with that task will be greatly appreciated.

When blueberry estimates were reinstated, the selection of States was based on all current data NASS had available, individual State information, plus what the 1987 Census of Agriculture reported. We thought the most important producing States were included. Maine is excluded because we do not have cooperation from the growers; we cannot secure a list of growers to survey. We will evaluate the production in the other States you list when 1992 Census of Agriculture data become available, next year. If any changes should be made, they can be done at that time. Please remember that we believe it is not necessary to cover 100 percent of the Nation's production.

Again, thank you for the assistance you have given in the past and for your offer to help in the future. That kind of cooperation between business and government is an integral part of a successful program.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
D.J. Fedewa, Michigan SSO

WILLIAMS FARMS CO., INC.

P.O. BOX 187
SURING, WISCONSIN 54174

Phone Lakewood Exchange 715-276-7655
Phone Suring Exchange 414-842-2076

March 17, 1993

Mr. Charles Caudill
Administrator
USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-2000

Mr. Caudill;

I am writing you at the suggestion of Mr. Lyle Pratt,
State Statistician, Wisconsin Agric. Statistics Service.

We have recently learned the data series that were contained in the ERS Vegetables & Specialties December report entitled "Vegetables, canned: Pack & Carryover" and "Vegetables, frozen: Pack & Carryover" apparently have been discontinued. These were tables 56 & 60 respectively in the Dec. 1991 report.

Since we are growers and therefore have no access to first hand knowledge of the markets on which our products are ultimately sold, this data is the only way we are able to keep in touch with the nature of our markets. It is useful to know the market for green beans is much more inelastic than the market for peas, or whether carryover has increased or decreased.

We need this data! We will be willing to pay reasonable fees to obtain the data from some other source, if it cannot be obtained from you.

We look forward to any suggestions you may have on how this data can be obtained. Thank you.

Sincerely,



A. E. Rushton

AER/nr

cc: Lyle Pratt WI ASS
Dean Zuleger WPVGA

GROWERS, SHIPPERS and DISTRIBUTORS of VEGETABLES

April 8, 1993

Mr. A. E. Rushton
Williams Farms Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 187
Suring, Wisconsin 54174

Dear Mr. Rushton:

Thank you for offering your comments about the statistical needs of the vegetable industry. Your remarks will be included in the proceedings from all of our information gathering conferences held across the country. You shall receive a copy of that report which will enable you to evaluate your remarks in the context of all the comments made.

The data formerly reported in the canned and frozen, pack and carryover tables you refer to was provided by the National Food Processor's Association (NFPA). That organization collected the information from their regional processors groups. In 1992, the NFPA decided to drop their statistical series and redirect their efforts away from statistics completely. To my knowledge, those data are not available anywhere else.

There is a possibility that the National Agricultural Statistics Service might be able to collect that data. There are, however, several issues that would have to be considered before anything is done. The primary issues are: 1) Funds - who will pay for the survey and how much does it cost? and 2) Does the complete industry, growers and processors, agree that the data are needed?

If you would like to pursue this issue further, please contact either me or Mr. Lyle Pratt. We will be quite happy to discuss the future of that data series.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Lyle Pratt, Wisconsin SSO

Pennsylvania Farmer

The Farm Business Magazine Of Mid-Atlantic Agriculture

704 Lisburn Road • Camp Hill, PA 17011 • (717) 761-6050 • Fax (717) 761-4517

March 18, 1993

Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
USDA/National Ag Statistics Service
Room 4117, South Building
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Due to previous commitments, I'm unfortunately unable to attend the March 30 Data Users Meeting in Mt. Laurel, N.J. But I would like to offer a couple thoughts to you regarding what this publication and many of our 57,000 readers feel is a highly-valued direct service to agriculture.

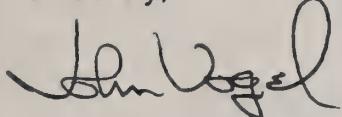
We are very pleased that W.C. Evans, state statistician for Pennsylvania, has been extremely cooperative in gathering machinery custom rate information in the Keystone State. Over the years, we have combined this data with updated reports provided by land-grant university staff from three other Mid-Atlantic states.

However, due to budgetary restraints and staff attrition, Pennsylvania's Ag Statistics Service is now probably the only collector of such data in this region. Anyone familiar with the customs of agriculture knows that the hiring and trading of services within the farm community is an extremely important reason why U.S. farmers are the most efficient producers in the world. That's why this "valuing" of custom machine services is so important.

I strongly urge that NASS extend the effort at least to Maryland and Delaware, tailoring the survey to reflect their different needs. If you would like, I can suggest which University of Maryland and University of Delaware economists to contact.

Other custom services developed in recent years due to changing ag technology need to be included in future surveys to increase the relevance and value to agriculture. As Wally knows, I am quite willing to lend suggestions when asked.

Sincerely,



John Vogel, Executive Editor

cc: W.C. Evans

April 12, 1993

Mr. John Vogel
Executive Editor
Pennsylvania Farmer
704 Lisburn Road
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania 17011

Dear Mr. Vogel:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will be included in the proceedings and you shall receive a copy. I also appreciate hearing the kind remarks about Mr. Wally Evans. Much of the time, personnel from our State offices never receive the gratitude due them for their efforts. I will pass along your comments to our Pennsylvania staff.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has intermittently conducted custom farming surveys; mostly in the mid-west. Those surveys were done at the request of, and funded by, local interests. Some custom farming data are collected with the annual Farm Costs and Returns Survey, but I do not think it provides the detail you would like. Custom farming is more of a local activity rather than National. I think the best way to approach this issue is from the local level. If custom farming is important to a State or region, then it is imperative that those in the region who believe it is necessary to have the data, get together to organize the program.

As you noted, our State Statistical Offices will cooperate and can prepare a survey plan. I am also certain that all three of the States would be happy to conduct a survey, if adequate funds are received. I suggest you and the economists from the Universities of Maryland and Delaware discuss this issue further with Wally.

Again, thank you for your remarks. If NASS, either through Wally or from here in Washington, can assist you, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Wallace Evans, Pennsylvania SSO



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION CENTER

R.D. 2, Box 48
Georgetown, Delaware 19947
Ph: 302/856-7303
Fax: 302/856-1845

March 18, 1993

Charles E. Caudill
USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, D.C. 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the Data User's Meeting for NASS, ERS, and AMS on March 30 in Mt. Laurel, N.J. However, I do want to take this opportunity to express the importance of this program to the agricultural community, the related industry, other government agencies and educational institutions. I also wish to offer suggestions that may improve the information and related services.

The accurate gathering and dissemination of acreage, production, yield, and price information on vegetable crops is an important barometer of the supply and demand forces of the marketplace. Additionally, this information is useful for decisions makers allocating resources for programs related to the industry. It is also important for justification purposes for EPA registration of pesticides.

In Delaware and Maryland, the finished value of processed poultry products is reported as farm income. This is deceiving and does not reflect what growers receive for the live birds. the processed value used now inflates the "farm income." I submit both should be reported, which would provide a more realistic picture. similarly, the processed value of vegetable crops (which is not reported) and the farm value of such crops should both be reported.

I realize gathering information on minor crops is difficult and time consuming. the work is appreciated and useful. It is especially important for processed vegetables, because production data is indicative of inventories of products, which has a direct bearing on price. It is my wish that this will remain a priority and could even be expanded to include additional processed crops.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. I regret I cannot join you on March 30th. I am sure you will have a productive meeting.

Sincerely,

Ed Kee

Ed Kee

Vegetable Crops Specialist

cc: Tom Feurer
Jack Tarburton
Ed Ralph
Gerry Cole
Jerry Vaughan
Dave Woodward
Dick Fowler

April 8, 1993

Mr. Ed Kee
Vegetable Crops Specialist
University of Delaware
R.D. 2, Box 48
Georgetown, Delaware 19947

Dear Mr. Kee:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will be included in the proceedings and you shall receive a copy.

Your remarks are very similar to those surfaced by others at the New Jersey meeting and at the other conferences. Specialty segments of agriculture typically suffer from a lack of data. These areas, however, are often the most difficult to assess and the most costly to survey. Specialty agriculture is usually concentrated in a few small areas of each State and performed by a small number of operators. These two qualities make data gathering difficult since more effort is required to conduct an appropriate number of interviews to assure reliable statistics.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service is trying to service these specialty areas a little better. In 1992, 15 additional fresh market vegetables and 4 more processing vegetables were added to the National program. Maple syrup, blueberries, and caneberries were also added. NASS also intensified its support of periodic fruit inventory surveys so many States lacking current inventory estimates are brought up-to-date. NASS is also beginning its fourth year of collecting chemical use data on field crops, fruits, nuts, and vegetables so chemical use decisions can be made based on factual information. With current resources, however, changes to the National program will be few and infrequent. I also realize that many of the NASS programs provide little data for Delaware.

We are, however, trying to create efficiencies which will enable our State offices to provide end-of-year estimates for a wider range of crops. To accomplish this requires a concentrated effort with our office, your Department, and local organizations. A primary input, of course, is a good list of producers. That must be coordinated with public relations efforts that encourage response to questionnaires to keep costs to a minimum.

I believe there is some confusion about the poultry prices you referenced. The NASS published prices for poultry represent a liveweight equivalent at the point of first sale. Likewise, the cash receipts for poultry published by the Economic Research Service reflect the liveweight value. Currently, we do not have the resources to provide processed prices for poultry. Similarly, the processed vegetable prices published represent returns to producers at the packing house door. Collecting data one step further introduces the issue of "value added" which is complex, difficult to assess, and is not farm related.

Mr. Ed Kee

Again, thank you for your comments. I appreciate your input, and we will consider your remarks as we plan our future estimating program.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL

Director
Estimates Division

cc:

Tom Feurer, Delaware SSO

PENNSYLVANIA CHRISTMAS TREE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

44 Cessna Drive Halifax, PA 17032
Melissa Piper Nelson, Executive Secretary

717-362-3705
FAX: 717-362-3762

March 24, 1993

Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20250



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814-447-3571

OSCAR BECK
Treasurer
786 Fir Drive
Walnutport, PA
18088
215-767-6750

Dear Mr. Caudill,

Our association recently received a notice from W.C. Evans, State Statistician for the Pa. Agricultural Statistics Service, regarding the upcoming meeting planned for March 30 in New Jersey.

We will be unable to attend, however, I would offer the following comments:

At present, no agricultural statistics are kept for the planting, harvesting, or sales of Christmas trees in Pennsylvania. As members of the Christmas tree industry, we feel this presents a myriad of problems, especially in setting goals and in viewing the overall state of our industry from a regional and national perspective.

In part, this lack of information has hindered our industry from being able to pinpoint oversupplies coming on the market in the past two years. While we understand that not having a state checkoff system prohibits gathering some of this information, we are now trying to establish some kind of in-house inventory reporting service to at least review some aspects of our industry.

If statistical information on the Christmas tree industry could be kept at state and national levels, we feel we could present these figures to the media and prevent the sensational type of reporting on sales figures which have been rampant the last two years. More than this, statistical information would help the overall industry to better plan for the future.

Sincerely,


Melissa Piper Nelson
Executive Secretary
Pa. Christmas Tree Growers Association

April 8, 1993

Ms. Melissa P. Nelson
Executive Secretary
Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Grower's Association
44 Cessna Drive
Halifax, Pennsylvania 17032

Dear Ms. Nelson:

Thank you for offering your comments about the statistical needs of the Christmas tree industry. Your remarks will become part of the written proceedings from all the conferences held across the country. You will receive a copy of that report which will enable you to evaluate your remarks in the context of all the comments made.

The Christmas tree industry has never received much recognition from within the agriculture community. Many do not consider it agriculture. In fact, for the Census of Agriculture, cut Christmas trees are excluded unless the operation qualifies as a "farm" under some other farming criteria. The income from Christmas tree sales is also excluded from farm income estimates provided by the USDA, Economic Research Service. The simple reason for omitting Christmas trees is that these operations are considered forestry products under the U.S. Department of Commerce Standard Industrial Code (SIC) classification. In contrast, we at the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) include Christmas tree operations in the official estimate of farm numbers.

Unfortunately, until these types of differences are resolved, providing statistical data for this segment of industry is unlikely. In addition, we have received only isolated requests for Christmas tree data. With current resource constraints, NASS cannot develop a special statistical program for only one or two States. If serious interest were generated through a National or regional group, then NASS would be more likely to consider this segment in its statistical data gathering program. Until that coordinated effort is seen, NASS can only consider requests on a State-by-State basis; and then only if the local organization can fund the survey.

Again, thank you for taking the time to send your comments.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Wallace Evans, Pennsylvania SSO

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

BOYD E. WOLFF

March 26, 1993

Charles E. Caudill
Administrator, USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Agriculture Building
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Thank you for the kind invitation to attend the Data Users Meeting in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, on March 30, 1993. Unfortunately, scheduling commitments will prevent me from attending the meeting. However, I am pleased to have this opportunity to submit written comments for consideration during your review of statistical information services provided to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

My comments are focused on data needs that have surfaced during meetings with various commodity associations and advisory boards. Specifically, our vegetable growers would benefit from statistical coverage for additional crops. Forestry is a significant enterprise in Pennsylvania, and the economic contribution and stability of this enterprise would be significantly enhanced by a regular program of statistical reports for forest products, including Christmas trees. Veal production is a large industry in Pennsylvania; however, we are lacking a definitive measurement of that portion of the meat supply. In keeping with our responsibility to promote the consumption of Pennsylvania-produced commodities, we are in need of data related to export marketing.

Your consideration of our data needs is sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boyd E. Wolff".

BOYD E. WOLFF



April 8, 1993

Honorable Boyd E. Wolff
Secretary, Department of Agriculture
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110-9408

Dear Secretary Wolff:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will become part of the report of all conferences held across the Nation. A copy of the report will be mailed to you.

Your remarks are very similar to those surfaced by others at the New Jersey meeting and at other conferences. Specialty segments of agriculture typically suffer from a lack of data. These areas, however, are often the most difficult to assess and the most costly to survey. Specialty agriculture is usually concentrated in a few small areas of each State and performed by a small number of operators. These two qualities make data gathering more difficult since more effort is required to conduct an appropriate number of interviews to assure reliable statistics.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service is trying to service these specialty areas a little better. In 1992, 15 additional fresh market vegetables and 4 more processing vegetables were added to the National program. Maple syrup, blueberries, and caneberries were also added. NASS also intensified its support of periodic fruit inventory surveys, so many States lacking current inventory estimates are brought up-to-date. With current resources, changes to the National program will be few and infrequent.

The Christmas tree industry has never received much recognition from within the agriculture community. Many do not consider it agriculture. In fact, for the Census of Agriculture, cut Christmas trees are excluded unless the operation qualifies as a "farm" under some other farming criteria. The income from Christmas tree sales is also excluded from farm income estimates provided by the USDA, Economic Research Service. The simple reason for omitting Christmas trees is that these operations are considered forestry products under the U.S. Department of Commerce Standard Industrial Code (SIC) classification. In contrast, we at the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) include Christmas tree operations in the official estimate of farm numbers.

Unfortunately, until these types of differences are resolved, providing statistical data for this segment of industry is unlikely. In addition, we have received only isolated requests for Christmas tree data. With current resource constraints, NASS cannot develop a special statistical program for only one or two States. If serious interest were generated through a National or regional group, then NASS would be more likely to consider this segment in its

Honorable Boyd E. Wolff

2

statistical data gathering program. Until that coordinated effort is seen, NASS can only consider requests on a State-by-State basis; and then only if the local organization can fund the survey.

We are, however, trying to create efficiencies which will enable our State offices to provide end-of-year estimates for a wider range of specialty crops and livestock items. To accomplish this requires a concentrated effort with our office, your Department, and local organizations. A primary input, of course, is a good list of producers. That must be coordinated with public relations efforts that encourages response to questionnaires to keep costs to a minimum.

Satisfying all the data needs of a State is difficult, but has certainly been enhanced because of the strong cooperative program between your Department and Mr. Evan's office. Thank you again for your input.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Wallace Evans, Pennsylvania SSO



MICHIGAN HORSE COUNCIL

575 Dansville Road
Dansville, Michigan 48819
March 29, 1993

Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
National Agricultural Statistics Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
South Building, Room 4117
Washington, D.C. 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Thank you for bringing the Midwest Regional Specialty Crops Data Users Conference to Michigan last week. We're sorry that the Michigan Horse Council was not able to be represented in person and appreciate the opportunity to submit written comments.

The data collected by the Michigan Agriculture Statistics Service (MASS) have become increasingly important to the Michigan horse industry over the past few years. The development of the Michigan Equine Monitoring System (MEMS) would have been impossible without the cooperation of MASS. State Statistician Don Fedewa and his staff have developed the sampling procedures for all phases of the system; designed, conducted, analyzed, published, and disseminated the results of the first phase (population and economic overview); made the initial contacts with sampled operators in the other phases in such a professional but friendly manner that cooperation has been exceptional; and generally participated in decisions regarding all aspects of the project.

Data collected by MEMS has already been used in many ways. The population data, especially when used in conjunction with the data collected by MASS on a 1984 survey of the horse industry, has been used to inform land use planning by township boards, trail development by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and elementary education classrooms via the "Ag in the Classroom" program of Michigan State University and the Michigan Farm Bureau. With the economic data, MEMS has been used by entrepreneurs, banks, and exhibition facility managers to plan projects ranging from local horse show sponsorships to a new multi-million dollar equestrian complex in southeastern Michigan. Used in conjunction with other data collected by MASS on Michigan agriculture, the status and role of the horse industry can be compared with other sectors of agriculture; for example, the realization that, in 1984, the income of Michigan equine operations was approximately equal to that from hogs led to the inclusion of the horse industry in a broad-based initiative to revitalize teaching and research about livestock at Michigan State University.

Collecting and maintaining reliable, unbiased statistical information is one of the functions of government which cannot be replaced by the private sector. The accumulation of comparable data over long time spans enables both public and private researchers to discern trends and patterns to use in developing strategy and policy. A key ingredient in the success of our MEMS program has been the reputation for, and demonstration of, confidentiality guaranteed to those responding to NASS/MASS questions. The Michigan horse industry looks forward to increasing benefits from this cooperative relationship as additional data accumulate. We hope that, when several years of data have been acquired, we will be able to look at more detailed analyses—economic activity by county or by breed, for example, or movement between own operations and boarding facilities. We also hope that efforts to describe and track other sectors

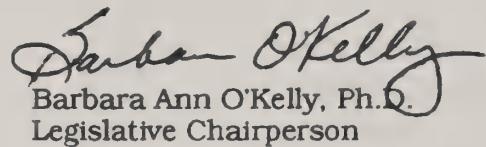
of Michigan agriculture, especially the smaller sectors which may not be based in locations traditionally defined as "agricultural," will continue and expand so that the total impact of agricultural activities on Michigan's economy will be known. Furthermore, we hope that equines will be included in NASS surveys nationwide, and that the National Animal Health Monitoring System will continue and will include horses in other states, so that we may develop a more accurate picture of the status and trends in this industry nation-wide.

Thank you for the cooperation of NASS personnel in planning our data collection (and for USDA veterinarians in gathering some of the data), and for the opportunity to voice our reflections on the current impact of NASS-related activities in Michigan and our recommendations for future directions.

Sincerely,



C. "Slim" Ellis
President



Barbara Ann O'Kelly, Ph.D.
Legislative Chairperson

CC: Mike Espy, Director, USDA
Senators Carl Levin and Don Riegle
Bill Schuette, MDA
Don Fedewa, Michigan State Statistician

April 16, 1993

Mr. C. "Slim" Ellis
President, Michigan
Horse Council
575 Dansville Road
Dansville, Michigan 48819

Dear Mr. Ellis:

Thank you for the letter submitted by you and Dr. O'Kelly about the Michigan Equine Monitoring System. The letter will be included in the proceedings.

We in NASS are often asked for statistics about the equine industry as we travel around the country. We point to the results of the joint efforts of the Michigan Horse Council and the Michigan Agricultural Statistics Service as the best way to obtain results.

We also agree with your point about tracking other sectors of agriculture so its total impact is better measured. We continue to seek funding to do so, but are operating under constraints preventing new initiatives. That budget climate makes cooperative ventures even more important.

Thank you again for your kind comments and thoughtful input.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

VENTURA COUNTY LEMON COOPERATIVE dba

VENTURA PACIFIC CO.

PACKERS OF "SUNKIST" LEMONS

P.O. BOX 5599 • MONTALVO, CALIFORNIA 93005 • TELEPHONE (805) 642-2135 • FAX (805) 642-9062

March 30, 1993

Jim Tippett
Chief Statistician
CASS/USDA
Agricultural Statisticians
P.O. 1258
Sacramento, CA 95812



Dear Jim:

Once again my apologies for missing your data users meeting this year. These meetings are important for the industry to review all the contributions your staff is making. It also provides an opportunity for the industry to make sure all that is available from the various agencies is not being overlooked in our quest to analyze a given situation.

There are several reports which are produced by your office which were eliminated due to budget cuts and there is one in particular that is missed. That report kept track of land market values of the various commodities. This report was a good source of information and it is an example of a useful report which is no longer produced. There are several others such as export reports that are missed.

CASS and the USDA agencies can significantly assist the citrus industry by using your expertise to estimate the crop production each season. CASS/USDA can make a significant contribution by using Objective Measurement Survey techniques to estimate the crop. This includes lemons and grapefruit estimates. Currently both of these varieties are producing larger and larger crops. You know that this has always been my concern and it continues to be a priority with me.

My compliments to all of your staff including Ron, Gary, Tom, Charlotte, Christine, and Juan.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Martinet".

William Martinet
Vice President

c.c. Charles Caudill

May 5, 1993

Mr. William Martinet
Vice President
Ventura Pacific Company
P.O. Box 5599
Montalvo, California 93005

Dear Mr. Martinet:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will be included in the proceedings and you shall receive a copy. I also appreciate hearing the kind remarks about Jim's staff. Much of the time, personnel from our State offices never receive the gratitude due them for their efforts. I am sure they appreciate your comments.

It is unfortunate that tight budgets have forced NASS and our State offices to cut back, or eliminate, some of its many reports. As you are well aware, our California office has been extremely affected by budget cuts. The land values report you refer to was a popular item. There is a possibility it may return; its reinstatement will be considered depending upon the level of funding received from the CDFA. The export reports are unlikely candidates to return; their funding was severely restricted.

We will continue to provide citrus estimates and continue to look for ways to improve them. We are also looking for ways to reduce our costs. Because of the high cost of conducting Objective Measurement Surveys, expansion is unlikely. We are also looking into ways to restructure our grapefruit estimates that may provide us some efficiencies as well as considering if so many orange forecasts are needed. We would appreciate your comments about those thoughts, too.

Again, thank you for your letter. Your remarks will be considered as we evaluate our estimating program.

Sincerely,

Frederic A. Vogel
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Jim Tippett, California SSO



P.O. Box 1428 • Woodland, California 95776 • Phone (916) 666-3331

April 1, 1993

Mr. Frederic A. Vogel
Director, Estimates Division
National Agricultural Statistics Service
5175 South Bldg.
U.S. Dep't of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-2000

Dear Fred:

Thank you for the opportunity of visiting with you in Sacramento today.

As we discussed, statistical data on planted forage crop acreage by species, as well as range land acreage and species were dropped from the National Agricultural Statistics Annual Report in the mid '80s.

Ranchers and farmers including beef producers, sheep producers, horse producers and dairymen or the commodity organizations representing such individuals, as well as individuals engaged in research, extension, teaching, business and government have grave concerns that this data is no longer available.

Cultivated forages, native grasses and range lands occupy more land mass in the United States than all other crops combined.

As we become more and more concerned with environmental protection, we need to consider the major contribution that these forage grasses make to the environment. Ground cover, planted and native, as well as range lands are of extreme importance and value in controlling erosion, thereby protecting and improving water quality. Forages crops are of integral importance to the success in implementing lower input sustainable agricultural systems.

The statistical data that NASS can provide will be extremely

valuable not only to researchers during varietal development, but commercial seed producers, farm machinery manufacturers and distributors, the cattle industry, and any other related groups.

On behalf of all of the above entities, and the seed industry in particular, I urge you to consider a way of providing this critically important information.

Very Truly Yours,



E.D. Weimortz
President

EDW/sc



Illinois Vegetable Growers Assn.

17510 GARDEN VALLEY ROAD
WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS 60098

Charles E. Caudill
Administrator, USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Re: National Agricultural Statistics Service
Midwest Regional Specialty Crops Data Users Conference

I was impressed with the Illinois Specialty Grower Survey that Jerry Clampet completed and presented at our January, 1993, Illinois Specialty Grower Conference at Pheasant Run, St. Charles, Ill. I am glad most growers cooperated by providing information for the survey.

I must admit, I never was in favor of government surveys. I always thought they were an invasion into my business and gave my competitors and customers an unfair advantage over me.

The information generated by these surveys may be helpful in convincing our politicians of our contribution as an Industry. Politicians seem only to respond to numbers and the monies generated by an industry. Because of our smaller numbers, I now see these surveys as useful tools.

I hope that these surveys will continue. I am sure the members of Illinois Specialty Growers Association will respond favorably to any future survey requests.

Sincerely,

Harry W. Alten, Jr.
Past President
Illinois Vegetable Growers
Association

April 7, 1993

Mr. Harry W. Alten, Jr.
Illinois Vegetable Growers Association
17510 Garden Valley Road
Woodstock, Illinois 66098

Dear Mr. Alten:

Thank you for inviting Mr. Clampet to your January Specialty Growers Conference and for sharing your feelings about his presentation. We always appreciate the chance to tell our story to the public. It is also especially rewarding to hear comments like yours because we believe we provide a valuable and needed service. We also believe strongly that the more data there is available, the more business decisions become fair to all involved. NASS will continue to provide the most accurate and unbiased data available to all concerned parties.

NASS wishes to continue these specialty grower surveys as long as possible. To do so requires a concerted effort from everyone. We look forward to your continuing support. Thank you for your kind comments; we will pass them along to Mr. Clampet.

Sincerely,

Frederic A. Vogel
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Gerald Clampet, Illinois SSO



Dried Fruit and Nut Company

Post Office Box 28900 • Fresno, CA 93729-8900 • Phone (209) 449-6500 • FAX (209) 449-6750

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April 7, 1993

Mr. Jim Tippett
USDA/NASS
P. O. Box 1258
Sacramento, CA 95182

Dear Jim:

I apologize for not being able to attend your meeting last week but, unfortunately, a conflict arose with my schedule.

The following is a summary of some of the changes/additions I would like to see made to the state and federal agricultural statistics for specific commodities.

DATES

- 1) Offshoot production and utilization (Ag vs ornamental) by variety.
- 2) Number of acres by age and variety (i.e. 1-5 years old, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 20+).
- 3) Number of acres of Medjools planted during the past three (3) years.
- 4) Separation of acreage and production for the Bard and Coachella Valleys.
- 5) Acreage and production statistics by variety for other date producing countries.

GRAPES

- 1) Thompson Seedless utilization
 - a) Wine
 - b) Concentrate
 - c) Raisins
 - d) Table
 - e) Other
- 2) Total grape concentrate production
 - a) White
 - b) Red
- 3) Overseas grape concentrate production
- 4) Format similar to apple concentrate production (see enclosed schedule)
- 5) French Colombard utilization
 - a) Wine
 - b) Concentrate
 - c) Other

PRUNES

- 1) Nursery sales of rootstocks and where sold
- 2) Production of specific sizes of prunes (size distribution)
- 3) Dehydration capacity by county and state total

If you have any questions regarding these items, please let me know. I rely upon and utilize both the state and federal statistics on a regular basis and hope that some of these additions can be implemented in the future.

Sincerely,

Mark Castaldi

Mark Castaldi
Strategic Planning Analyst

/bw
Encs.

**CONCENTRATED APPLE JUICE (CAJ): PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION
IN SELECTED COUNTRIES 1/
(Metric Tons at 70/71 Degree^E Brix)**

Country/ Marketing Year 2/	Beginning Stocks	Production	Imports	Total Supply	Exports	Domestic Consumption	Ending Stocks
N O R T H E R N H E M I S P H E R E C O U N T R I E S							
Austria							
1990/91	15,800	21,800	25,600	63,200	48,500	8,700	6,000
1991/92	6,000	17,900	20,700	44,600	31,000	8,750	4,850
1992/93	4,850	23,800	23,100	51,750	37,500	8,850	5,400
France							
1990/91	0	14,693	3,100	17,793	7,548	10,245	0
1991/92	0	3,831	3,430	7,261	4,696	2,565	0
1992/93	0	10,000	4,000	14,000	4,000	10,000	0
Germany 3/							
1990/91	20,652	65,135	120,032	205,819	58,452	133,069	14,298
1991/92	15,887	37,174	122,374	175,435	39,517	129,563	6,355
1992/93	6,355	103,262	119,149	228,766	50,837	141,390	36,539
Hungary							
1990/91	0	31,500	0	31,500	25,100	6,400	0
1991/92	0	35,000	0	35,000	27,900	7,100	0
1992/93	0	32,500	0	32,500	25,000	7,500	0
Italy							
1990/91	10,000	46,000	4,600	60,600	44,200	5,900	10,500
1991/92	10,500	43,000	5,000	58,500	39,000	3,500	16,000
1992/93	16,000	47,500	6,750	70,250	44,700	6,350	19,000
Mexico							
1990/91	0	21,800	0	21,800	19,800	2,000	0
1991/92	0	23,400	0	23,400	21,600	2,800	0
1992/93	0	21,800	0	21,800	19,800	2,000	0
Spain							
1990/91	1,600	9,200	5,700	16,500	5,600	10,000	900
1991/92	900	8,000	7,100	16,000	5,400	10,600	0
1992/93	0	22,500	6,000	28,500	10,000	10,500	8,000
United States 4/							
1990/91	0	129,116	203,215	332,331	12,312	320,019	0
1991/92	0	140,400	161,300	301,700	12,600	289,100	0
1992/93	0	150,000	155,000	305,000	12,500	292,500	0
Subtotal: Northern Hemisphere Countries							
1990/91	48,052	339,244	362,247	749,543	221,512	496,333	31,698
1991/92	33,287	308,705	319,904	661,896	181,713	452,978	27,205
1992/93	27,205	411,362	313,999	752,566	204,337	479,290	68,939
S O U T H E R N H E M I S P H E R E C O U N T R I E S							
Argentina							
1990/91	500	59,500	0	60,000	56,807	1,693	1,500
1991/92	1,500	65,000	0	66,500	63,000	2,000	1,500
1992/93	1,500	50,000	0	51,500	49,000	2,000	500
Australia							
1990/91	0	12,688	1,669	14,357	1,100	13,257	0
1991/92	0	11,268	1,238	12,506	1,500	11,006	0
1992/93	0	11,390	1,500	12,890	1,300	11,590	0
Chile							
1990/91	0	27,700	0	27,700	27,500	200	0
1991/92	0	34,000	0	34,000	33,500	500	0
1992/93	0	30,000	0	30,000	29,500	500	0
New Zealand							
1990/91	2,738	15,705	278	18,721	13,898	4,659	164
1991/92	164	18,445	243	18,852	15,055	3,792	5
1992/93	5	17,880	250	18,135	14,200	3,800	135
South Africa							
1990/91	0	17,380	0	17,380	10,630	6,750	0
1991/92	0	19,870	0	19,380	12,530	6,850	0
1992/93	0	19,250	0	19,250	12,300	6,950	0
Subtotal: Southern Hemisphere							
1990/91	3,238	132,973	1,947	138,158	109,935	26,559	1,664
1991/92	1,664	148,583	1,481	151,238	125,585	24,148	1,505
1992/93	1,505	128,520	1,750	131,775	106,300	24,840	635
W o r l d							
1990/91	51,290	472,217	364,194	887,701	331,447	522,892	33,362
1991/92	34,951	457,288	321,385	813,134	307,298	477,126	28,710
1992/93	28,710	539,882	315,749	884,341	310,637	504,130	69,574
WORLD TOTAL MINUS THE UNITED STATES							
1990/91	51,290	343,101	160,979	555,370	319,135	202,873	33,362
1991/92	34,951	316,888	160,085	511,434	294,698	188,026	28,710
1992/93	28,710	389,882	160,749	579,341	298,137	211,630	69,574

1/ Major CAJ producing countries for which data are available.

2/ Northern Hemisphere marketing years begin in July of the first year shown for all countries except Italy where the marketing year begins in January of first year shown. Southern Hemisphere marketing year begins in January of the second year except for New Zealand where the marketing year begins in October of first year shown.

3/ United Germany data begin 1990/91.

4/ Stock figures not available. Production estimated by PAS based on USDA/NASS utilization data and the assumption that 7.31 metric tons of fresh apples equals 1 metric ton of CAJ.

U.S. IMPORTS OF CONCENTRATED APPLE JUICE
 (Metric Tons at 70/71 Degrees Brix) 1/

Origin	1985/86	1986/87	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92
Argentina	33,910	26,148	40,056	43,084	45,224	66,845	54,515
West Germany	36,340	41,465	19,4..	48,690	30,542	33,146	28,316
Chile	5,571	8,131	7,905	8,461	12,651	20,614	15,737
Hungary	4,063	9,415	13,279	17,053	12,231	22,598	13,004
Turkey	1,406	2,775	0	3,133	476	6,897	8,286
Austria	16,084	26,753	11,766	21,170	16,949	25,130	7,061
Belgium-Luxembourg	7,514	18,266	3,537	11,271	2,457	4,822	6,839
Mexico	503	661	2,412	2,853	1,963	4,663	6,201
Poland	0	322	343	1,610	2,121	4,782	2,699
Switzerland	223	307	117	21	2	21	2,648
Brazil	411	540	190	343	57	9	2,579
New Zealand	1,602	2,218	1,513	1,519	1,188	2,321	2,438
Netherlands	13,676	6,909	3,311	4,941	532	1,377	2,436
Canada	1,994	3,017	2,814	958	477	878	2,151
Czechoslovakia	0	0	0	0	0	525	2,077
Portugal	2,422	2,047	4,471	2,267	2,415	1,250	923
Spain	13,221	5,826	9,085	11,689	4,762	1,322	812
Yugoslavia	628	1,112	1,704	1,534	1,133	2,996	667
Australia	2,006	1,650	506	457	777	1,500	589
South Africa	9,697	2,582	0	0	0	0	550
China (Mainland)	287	100	144	32	68	555	333
France	2,387	2,688	196	791	57	174	245
Italy	6,059	6,809	2,036	445	470	172	121
United Kingdom	221	286	118	8	1	0	61
Leeward-Windward Islands	18	5	0	0	20	0	19
Sweden	0	17	0	0	0	257	5
Peru	10	0	0	0	0	0	5
Japan	180	16	0	1	34	25	3
Israel	680	0	0	7	641	23	3
Niger	0	0	0	20	0	104	0
Denmark	349	107	1	0	100	86	0
Colombia	0	0	0	0	0	71	0
Trinidad & Tobago	0	0	0	0	1	23	0
India	37	22	65	46	42	19	0
Thailand	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
Korea, Republic of	0	0	10	5	3	3	0
Mali	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mozambique	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Singapore	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
United Arab Emirates	0	0	0	207	0	0	0
Bahrain	48	0	0	0	0	0	0
Algeria	83	0	0	0	0	0	0
Saudi Arabia	73	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greece	152	0	0	76	0	0	0
Netherlands Antilles	0	0	0	3	2	0	0
Guatemala	1	1	4	0	0	0	0
Mauritius	0	129	0	38	66	0	0
Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	40	0	0
Ecuador	0	8	0	1	0	0	0
Uruguay	0	15	395	828	0	0	0
Djibouti	0	0	0	96	0	0	0
Burkina	78	7	0	0	0	0	0
Panama	0	93	17	0	0	0	0
Haiti	70	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	162,036	170,448	125,474	183,657	137,498	203,215	161,323

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

NOTE: July-June marketing year. Data prior to January 1, 1989 include small amounts of pear juice.

1/ Bureau of the Census data on apple juice are given in single strength equivalent (SSZ). Data have been converted into metric tons of CAJ by multiplying thousands of SSE liters by 0.193.

May 6, 1993

Mr. Mark Castaldi
Dole Dried Fruit and Nut Company
P.O. Box 28900
Fresno, California 93729-8900

Dear Mr. Castaldi:

It is unfortunate you could not attend the Data Users conference held recently, but your written comments are appreciated. Your remarks will be included in the proceedings and you shall receive a copy.

Your remarks are very similar to those surfaced by others at the California meeting and at our other conferences. Specialty segments of agriculture typically suffer from a lack of data. These areas, however, are often the most difficult to assess and the most costly to survey. Specialty agriculture is usually concentrated in a few small areas of each State and performed by a small number of operators. These two qualities make data gathering more difficult and expensive since extra effort is required to conduct an appropriate number of interviews to assure reliable statistics.

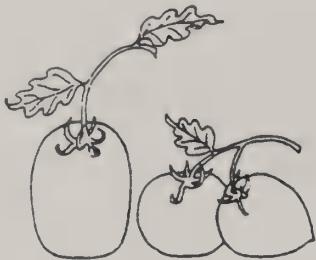
Tight budgets have forced NASS and our State offices to cut back, or eliminate, some of its many reports. As you are well aware, our California office has been extremely affected by budget cuts. Because of this situation, it is unlikely that our statistical series relating to the crops you list will be expanded. However, should additional funding be received from either the industry or the CDFA, we certainly would reconsider your suggestions. We are considering attempting to garner resources to conduct a large scale annual survey to provide annual estimates for many items not now covered in the estimating program.

Again, thank you for your suggestions. We will keep them in mind as our estimating programs are periodically evaluated.

Sincerely,

Frederic A. Vogel
Director
Estimates Division

cc:
Jim Tippett, California SSO



CALIFORNIA TOMATO GROWERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.

April 8, 1993

Mr. Lawrence K. Taber, President
California League of Food Processors
660 "J" Street, Suite 290
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Larry:

I am writing in response to the California League of Food Processors' Statistical Committee's recommendations regarding the timing and content of reports generated by the California Agricultural Statistics Service (CASS).

California Tomato Growers Association continues to support the accurate, timely, and comprehensive reporting of information that promotes the orderly marketing and efficient allocation of resources in the tomato industry.

At this juncture, the Association has not had adequate time to fully analyze the committee's recommendations. However, at first cut, I believe the Association could support resuming the reporting of acreages by county and price information on both a farm gate and plant delivery basis. While the recommendations regarding the timing of most of the reports seems defensible, CTGA is very concerned about moving the "CANNERS INTENTIONS" report forward to the middle of January. This concern stems from the following:

1. It is our understanding that the purpose of moving the "CANNERS INTENTIONS" report to January is to allow individual canners the opportunity to adjust their respective pack plans to better fit the industry's total pack (supply) with demand. By the very nature of its intended use, the figure becomes inaccurate.

2. CTGA believes it is counterproductive for the industry to encourage CASS to publish an inaccurate January figure. The size of the upcoming crop has huge implications with regard to price, not only of raw product but also the pricing of tomato products in the market. Buyers will take a position in the market, in a big part, based on the anticipated size of the new crop. In addition, financial institutions tend to treat the CASS number as "fact" using it to base financing decisions to both growers and processors until more reliable information becomes available.

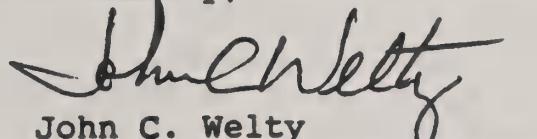
Mr. Lawrence K. Taber

- 2 -

April 8, 1993

CTGA feels that it is a noble effort on the part of the League to provide information that will aid canners in balancing supply and demand. CTGA would like the opportunity to explore alternatives that achieve this goal without advancing disruptive market signals.

Sincerely,



John C. Welty
Executive Vice President

JCW:cyo

cc: Jim Tippett, State Statistician, CASS
Don Bay, Acting Administrator, NASS ✓
Fred Teensma, Market News, AMS
Gary Lucier, Head, Vegetable Analysis Section, ERS

AMERICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION, INC.



April 23, 1993

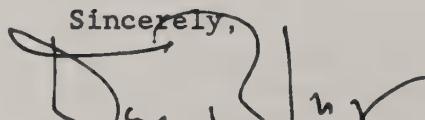
Mr. Frederic A. Vogel
Director, Estimates Division
National Agricultural Statistics Service
5175 South Building
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-2000

Dear Mr. Vogel:

I wish to add the support of the American Seed Trade Association to the request made to you by the President of Cal/West Seeds, Ed Weimortz. There is a strong need for statistical data on planted forage crop acreage by species, as well as range land acreage by species.

As information is gathered on which to make decisions concerning grazing fees, the future of conservation acreage, new conservation programs, and the ability to address environmental concerns, the type of information requested, will not be available. In order to address these concerns in an intelligent manner, it would appear that the statistics outlined should become an overall part of statistics gathering.

I urge you to strongly consider adding this to your current search for relevant and useful data.

Sincerely,

DAVID R. LAMBERT
Executive Vice President



NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE

April 23, 1993

Area Irrigation Specialist
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Box 140, Carrington, ND 58421
(701) 652-3194

Mr. Charles E. Caudill
Administrator, USDA/NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20205-2000

Dear Mr. Caudill:

Although I was unable to attend your March 23 conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, of the National Agricultural Statistics Service Midwest Regional Specialty Crops Data Users, I would like to submit the following comments:

As Extension Area Irrigation Specialist for North Dakota State University, I find the information you publish annually to be very helpful in my line of work in dealing with irrigated agriculture and specialty crops. Every year we continue to see increased vegetable and specialty crop production within North Dakota.

The growers are currently in the process of forming a vegetable and fruit production growers association and your efforts to report the amount of production by crop and specialty animals will help this association in attracting processors and marketing associations to this area. I encourage the adoption of continued specialty crop reporting by your service and find it invaluable, not only to myself but, to other people involved in the production of agricultural and animal products in the nation.

The specialty crops that I would find most useful in having reported acreage would be those crops produced on a large scale with conventional machinery, such as dry edible beans (pinto, navy, red kidney), potatoes (again separated by reds, russet, or white), sugar beets, and onions. Those crops requiring much higher labor and specialized machinery such as, fresh market vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, etc.), would be helpful but not as critical to my line of work.

I applaud your efforts to expand your reporting service and do concur that it would be useful to many of us within the education and the production industries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James K. Weigel".

James K. Weigel
Area Irrigation Specialist

JKW/las

Helping You Put Knowledge To Work

May 11, 1993

Mr. James K. Weigel
North Dakota Extension Service
Box 140
Carrington, North Dakota 58421

Dear Mr. Weigel:

Thank you for offering your comments about North Dakota's statistical needs. Your remarks will become part of the written proceedings from all the conferences held across the country. You will receive a copy of that report which will enable you to evaluate your remarks in the context of all the comments made.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) realizes the importance of specialty agriculture is expanding in many areas. NASS also would like to expand its coverage to more of these crops. With restricted budgets in the past several years, and with little improvement expected for at least the next several years, there is little likelihood that our programs can change significantly. We are, however, trying to economize and perform current functions more efficiently. With accrued savings, we are trying to add a few more specialty crop estimates in States that have seen the most growth.

In North Dakota, our current program includes estimates of dry beans by class, and estimates of pinto and navy beans are already made. Red Kidneys are not broken out individually, but I will ask our Fargo office to investigate that possibility. In the NASS July Crop Production report, North Dakota is included in the table showing the percent of acreage planted to red, white, and russet types of potatoes. Also, in the November report, the percentage of acres planted to the major varieties were again reported. They also break their estimates of potatoes in storage into types at least once during the storage season. Sugar beet estimates are also covered in several reports. Onions and vegetables, so far, are not estimated for North Dakota. If you would like more information on the current estimates, please call Steve Wiyatt at (701) 239-5306.

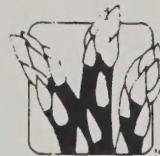
Again, thank you for taking the time to send your comments.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:

Steven D. Wiyatt, North Dakota SSO



MICHIGAN ASPARAGUS

April 27, 1993

Mr. Charles E. Caudill, Administrator
U.S.D.A./NASS
Room 4117 South Building
Washington, DC 20250-2000

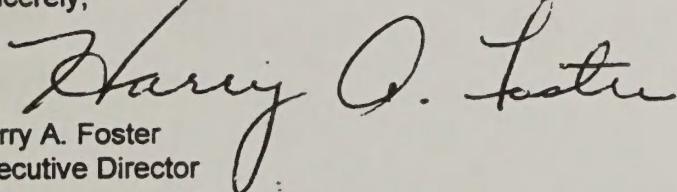
Dear Sir:

This letter is to follow up on the Data User Conference held in Grand Rapids.

1. We appreciate the 3-year rotation of the Fruit, Vegetable, and Nursery Surveys being conducted in Michigan. There are many changes; therefore, it is important that the data base be kept current.
2. The Benton Harbor Market News weekly and annual reports on processed product deliveries is very useful.
3. Monitoring the imports of fresh market and processed asparagus from Mexico and other south-of-the-border countries is very important. We need to develop data on the production of asparagus and the amount processed in canned and frozen form in the underdeveloped countries.
4. As these Free Trade Agreements are negotiated, it would be very helpful if we knew the acreage and value of each crop and the number of producers in each country.
5. Harmonization and Enforcement of Laws, Rules and Regulations in these Free Trade Countries is very important. It would be most helpful if we knew what laws, rules and regulations were in effect and the level of regulatory enforcement.
6. Encourage Economic Research Service (ERS) to support the Michigan State University Agricultural Economists to study the competitive issues between Mexico and U.S./Michigan.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,


Harry A. Foster
Executive Director

May 18, 1993

Mr. Harry O. Foster
Executive Director
Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board
2133 University Park Drive, Suite 700
Okemos, Michigan 48864

Dear Mr. Foster:

Thank you for the additional remarks relating to the Grand Rapids Data Users Conference. They will be added to the proceedings which will be published soon.

We agree with your comments on the 3-year rotational survey plan and would like to see the plan implemented in more States. Don Fedewa deserves the credit for getting this plan started in Michigan. We think it is a good plan and would like to see more States adopt that practice. The other issues you list concerning the reporting of imports, the regulatory functions, and Economic Research Service (ERS) support for Michigan State University are outside of the NASS area of responsibility. We have given a copy of your letter to officials of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Economic Research Service (ERS) who are involved in the monitoring of Mexican vegetable production and trade, and to a FAS official involved in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations. These people are:

Frank Piason, Director, Horticultural and Tropical Products Division, FAS;

Bob Robinson, Director, Agricultural and Trade Analysis Division, ERS;

Fred Hoff, Chief, Specialty Agriculture Branch, Agricultural and Trade Analysis Division, ERS;

Gary Lucier, Leader, Vegetable Analysis Section, Specialty Agricultural Branch; and

Ken Roberts, Director, Inter-America and Western Europe Division, FAS.

Thank you again for your comments. We appreciate the support you provide to our Lansing office.

Sincerely,

FREDERIC A. VOGEL
Director
Estimates Division

cc:

Don Fedewa, Michigan SSO

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